

# Pro-Gay Anti-Immigrant Rhetoric into the Mainstream

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*A critical analysis of the application of  
populist rhetoric in mainstream Dutch politics*

## Master Thesis

Supervised by **Dr. Andrew Shield**  
Leiden University  
M.A. in History, *Governance of Migration and Diversity*

**Akke de Hoog** ( s2301725 )

Javastraat 5-3h, 1094GX Amsterdam  
akkedehoog@gmail.com  
+31 6 40434276

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# INTRODUCTION

In Western Europe, populist parties have been at the forefront of anti-immigration politics. Populist parties have received an increase of votes in The Netherlands and their increased presence in the political system has led them to join coalitions<sup>1</sup> with mainstream right-wing and center parties. Right-wing parties across Europe have adopted certain rhetorical populist themes, ultimately bringing themes previously seen as fringe into mainstream political rhetoric.

Mainstream parties in the Netherlands, are established parties that have frequently been part of the coalition.<sup>2</sup> The mainstream parties that are studied in this thesis are Christen Democratisch Appèl (CDA), Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie (VVD), and Partij voor de Arbeid (PvdA). These parties represent the Center, Right and Left respectively.

Populist parties are typified by an ideology of exclusive nationalism, connected to a distrust of the ‘elites’ and a claim to represent the ordinary people.<sup>3</sup> This form of nationalism is characterized by a nativist policy platform that prioritizes the interests of native-born or established inhabitants against those of immigrants. Over the last twenty years, immigration, Islam, and integration have become central and intertwined issues employed in an attempt at emphasizing ‘differences’ that exist between ‘us’, the native population, and ‘them,’ the newcomers. Populism displays a paradoxical conservative countermovement that embraces certain progressive ideas while simultaneously fighting others. In the Netherlands, this has resulted in the adoption of (certain) LGBTQ<sup>4</sup> rights and emancipation as inherent Dutch values. These ‘Dutch values’ are seen as a result of the progress the

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<sup>1</sup> The party that wins the most votes gets to lead to the coalition and consequently, the Cabinet is named after the party leader of the winning party. The parties who do not join the coalition form the opposition and cannot decide on the policy proposals formed in the coalition agreement and hence have less impact on the governing process.

<sup>2</sup> The coalition is an alliance of political parties that will govern together in the House of Representatives, which counts 150 seats. Coalitions are formed to ensure an alliance of more than 76 seats. The Dutch system is highly fragmented with many different small parties, it is, therefore, unlikely that a party will receive enough votes to ensure 76 seats by itself without forming a coalition

<sup>3</sup> Tjitske Akkerman, *The impact of Populist Radical-Right Parties on Immigration Policy Agendas: A Look at the Netherlands*. (Washington, DC: Migration Policy Institute 2018).

<sup>4</sup> Although the umbrella term ‘LGBTQ’ is used by various scholars, it will become clear in this thesis that normative gay, and to a lesser extent lesbian, formations are foregrounded in pro-gay anti-immigrant rhetoric.

Dutch made through depillarization, secularization, and overall liberation. These progressive values are now seen as being under threat of 'backward' immigrant culture, with special concern to the growing number of Muslims that are living in the Netherlands.

This thesis focuses on the period between 2000 and 2017 because this is when LGBTQ rights and emancipation in relation to immigration, Islam, and integration became more prominently situated in the Dutch political debate. The politics of Frits Bolkestein and Centrum Partij (CP) leader Hans Janmaat are purposely excluded because, even though both can be considered populist politicians with strong anti-immigrant and Islamic ideals, LGBTQ emancipation and rights received little to no attention in their politics.

Acceptance of equal rights for gays, lesbians, bisexuals and in some cases, trans and queer persons, has become a projected norm in Dutch society and has become central to the debate on multiculturalism and Islam, and hence, essential to the articulation that Dutch and Muslim cultures are incompatible. However, specific policies or policy proposals to improve the rights of LGBTQ people, and more specifically, immigrant and Muslim-LGBTQ people are almost non-existent in populist politics. Current issues that are at play in the LGBTQ Muslim community are not addressed and parties are seemingly unaware of the existence of this intersection altogether. This clearly shows how gay rights serve the purpose of promoting an anti-immigrant agenda prevalent in populist politics. The question arises if this propaganda is only reserved for populists or whether mainstream parties are guilty of this as well. Mainstream parties have actively spoken out against the rise of populism in the Netherlands. However, the same arguments regarding LGBTQ rights and immigration that populist parties, such as the Partij voor de Vrijheid (PVV), make seem to surface in speeches and interviews with politicians representing mainstream parties such as Mark Rutte (VVD), Sybrand Buma (CDA), and Lodewijk Asscher (PvdA) up until the most recent elections in 2017. Through party programs, party manifestos as well as interviews, speeches and debate from party representatives, this thesis explores how mainstream parties have used gay rights to promote their anti-immigration agenda and hence if a shift in rhetoric has occurred from the populist right to the mainstream. The research question to lead this thesis is: *How and why have mainstream parties in the Netherlands used pro-gay and anti-immigration rhetoric employed by populist parties LPF and PVV between 2000 and 2017?*

The thesis consists of three parts. Part One includes the Historiography, Material and Method, and Theory sections. Part Two forms the core of the research where populist and mainstream party documents are systematically analyzed and compared. Part Two is comprised of four chapters. Chapter One defines what the pro-gay anti-immigrant rhetoric (PGAIR) connotes. Chapters Two, Three, and Four each discuss a mainstream party and their use of PGAIR between 2000 and 2017. Part Three, the final part, is the conclusion, which will discuss why mainstream parties in the Netherlands have used PGAIR and as such forms an answer to the research question of this thesis.

# Part One

## Historiography

The topic of populism and right-wing parties has been widely researched in Western Europe from different disciplines including political science, gender studies, communications, and history. Research differs from a focus on what populist parties are, how they came into existence, how they function and if they are successful, as well as their influence on the political sphere and on policy-making. Recent research in the Netherlands has focused on the mainstreaming<sup>5</sup> of populist politics to central and right-wing parties in the Netherlands.<sup>6</sup> There has also been a growing amount of research on the place and role of homosexuality in the Dutch debate, immigration, Islam, integration and how populist parties are using pro-gay politics as a tool to promote their anti-immigration agendas.<sup>7</sup> However, there is little research that addresses the mainstreaming of pro-gay anti-immigrant sentiments specifically.

Tjitkse Akkerman, a political science researcher at the University of Amsterdam, has conducted extensive research on populist parties in the Netherlands and their direct and indirect influence on mainstream parties with specific regard to immigration and integration policies.<sup>8</sup> In her article, “Immigration policy and electoral competition in Western Europe: A fine-grained analysis of party positions over the past two decades” she looked at the extent to which, and the ways in which mainstream parties have changed their positions and rhetoric with respect to key issues of populist

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<sup>5</sup> Mainstreaming here is meant as speech and policies on the fringe becoming more commonly used.

<sup>6</sup> Akkerman, *Impact of Populist Radical-Right*; Akkerman, Immigration policy; Tjitse Akkerman, ‘Gender and the radical right in Western Europe: a comparative analysis of policy agendas’, *Patterns of Prejudice*, 49:1-2 (2015) 37-60; Bart Cammaerts, ‘The Mainstreaming of Extreme Right-Wing Populism: what is to be done?’ *Communication Culture & Critique* 11:1 (2018) 7-20; Merijn Oudenampsen, De Grote Ruk, *De Groene Amsterdammer*, 1:2 (2018) <https://www.groene.nl/artikel/de-grote-ruk>; Sarah L. de Lange and Liza M Mügge, ‘Gender and right-wing populism in the Low Countries: ideological variations across parties and time’, *Patterns of Prejudice*, 49:1-2 (2015) 61-80.

<sup>7</sup> Paul Mepschen, Jan Willem Duyvendak and Evelien Tonkens, ‘Sexual Politics, Orientalism and Multicultural citizenship in the Netherlands’, *Sociology*, 44:5 (2010) 962-979; Andrew DJ Shield, *Immigrants in the Sexual Revolution: Perceptions and participation in northwest Europe*, (Cham, Switzerland, Palgrave Macmillan 2017) 1-14; Akkerman, Gender and the radical right; Stefan Dudink, ‘A queer nodal point: Homosexuality in Dutch debates on Islam and multiculturalism’, *Sexualities*, 20:1-2 (2017) 3-23; Geert Hekma and Jan Willem Duyvendak, ‘Queer Netherlands, a puzzling example’, *Sexualities*, 14:6 (2011) 625-631; Geert Hekma ‘Imams and homosexuality: A post-gay debate in the Netherlands’, *Sexualities*, 5:2 (2002) 237-248.

<sup>8</sup> Akkerman, *Impact of Populist Radical-Right*; Akkerman, Immigration policy; Akkerman, Gender and the radical right.



parties.<sup>9</sup> She found that the electoral success of the populist parties has an impact on the policy agendas of mainstream parties and resulted in a shift further to the right among mainstream right parties such as the VVD in the Netherlands. She found that mainstream parties VVD on the right, and CDA in the center, rhetorically comply with the PVV by emphasizing national identity issues and align themselves with some of the PVV policy positions.<sup>10</sup> This thesis builds on the findings of Akkerman.

The shift from the mainstream to the right is echoed by Bart Cammaerts, a researcher in politics and communication at the London School of Economics and Political Science. While working outside the Dutch context, he describes how the populist discourse has been mainstreamed through the appropriation of parts of the discourse by mainstream right-wing parties.<sup>11</sup> This has resulted in the perception of many former populist ideas as center-right ideas or even ‘common-sense.’ Cammaerts especially highlights “differentialist racism”—the fundamental incompatibility of autochthonous and allochthonous<sup>12</sup> groups—as a copied populist idea.<sup>13</sup> Akkerman provides some examples from which this appropriation becomes clear including policy proposals being especially targeted at Muslims and immigrants which in some cases are in contradiction with the Dutch constitution.

In a different publication, Akkerman paid particular attention to the use of gender in populist politics in the Netherlands.<sup>14</sup> Here, she introduces the politics of pro-gay rights employed by the PVV as a tool to promote an anti-immigration agenda and how this is intertwined with anti-Islam politics. Akkerman addresses this by describing how populist parties have adopted their conservative views to the liberal and cosmopolitan contexts of Western Europe. Populist parties in Europe, Akkerman argues, present their conservative views as compatible with the dominant liberal laws and opinions in the countries they work in by adopting progressive ideas regarding

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<sup>9</sup> Akkerman, Immigration policy

<sup>10</sup> Akkerman, Impact of Populist Radical-Right

<sup>11</sup> Cammaerts, Mainstreaming Extreme Right.

<sup>12</sup> ‘Allochthonous’ people used to refer to residents of the Netherlands with a migration background whereas ‘Autochthonous’ people used to refer to native residents of the Netherlands. The term ‘Allochthonous’ was replaced by Dutch with a migration background in governmental documents in 2016. This was due to the negative connotation of the word.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, 11.

<sup>14</sup> Akkerman, Gender and the radical right.

homosexuality and gender.<sup>15</sup> In this sense, these populist parties with conservative views simultaneously appear as liberal parties and their conservative and extreme right-wing ideas are finding ground in the mainstream political sphere. The electoral success of the populist right parties has an impact on the policy agenda of mainstream parties. In countries where populist radical right parties have been electorally successful programmatic focus on immigration and integration as increased.<sup>16</sup>

However, Akkerman does not fully address the central point of sexual politics in this shift. Mepschen, Duyvendak, and Tonkens, researchers at the University of Amsterdam, clearly describe that the secularization of Dutch society has transformed social behaviors around sexuality and morality since the 1960s and the normalization of gay identities since the 1980s.<sup>17</sup> This made sexuality into an adaptable discourse in the framing of modernity versus tradition and therefore, natives versus immigrants.<sup>18</sup> By foregrounding the ‘natural’ belonging of normative gay and lesbian identities to the nation, these identities have become an important embodiment of the traits from which liberal democracies in the Netherlands derive their sense of civilizational superiority: modernity, individualism, liberalism, and tolerance. A more in-depth study on this has been conducted by Stefan Dudink, who explains why homosexuality became central in the immigration debate in the Netherlands and specifically how pro-gay anti-immigrant politics came into existence.<sup>19</sup> He argues that homosexuality helped to form an end to a political climate of compromises, by introducing it as a non-negotiable issue. Homosexuality grew to be the point of reference to generated meanings of conflict over national identity and the place of religion in secular society.<sup>20</sup> This understanding is echoed by Mepschen, Duyvendak, and Tonkens who argue that the promotion of gay emancipation has become associated with Islamophobia, while simultaneously showing solidarity with Muslims is represented, especially by the populist right, as trivializing or even supporting Muslim homophobia, ultimately putting LGBTQ activist in an awkward position.<sup>21</sup> The instrumentality of pro-gay politics is also discussed and illustrated in-depth by Andrew Shield. His

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<sup>15</sup> Akkerman, *Gender and the radical right*, 57.

<sup>16</sup> Akkerman, *Immigration policy*, 62-63.

<sup>17</sup> Mepschen, Duyvendak and Tonkens., *Sexual Politics*.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 962.

<sup>19</sup> Dudink, *A queer nodal point*.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

<sup>21</sup> Mepschen, Duyvendak and Tonkens, *Sexual Politics*, 965.

book, *Immigrants in the Sexual Revolution* provides an overview of the period from 2000 to 2017 to show how the rhetoric of pro-gay anti-immigrant politics grew from a particular homonationalist perspective of Pim Fortuyn to a political instrument of Geert Wilders.<sup>22</sup> Shield's introductory chapter demonstrates that pro-gay, anti-immigrant viewpoints can resonate with all sorts of populist voters, regardless of sexual orientation and have spread around Europe, namely to Denmark, Sweden and to some extent Germany.

Gloria Wekker also holds an important position in the debate around pro-gay anti-immigrant politics in the Netherlands. She especially highlights the importance of intersectionality within in this debate and the paradoxes that occur when leaving out an intersectional approach.<sup>23</sup> She explains how in Dutch society, an LGBTQ person is implicitly imagined as being a white male, and the perpetrators of violence against gays are imagined as Moroccans.<sup>24</sup> She addresses the paradox of when an immigrant identifies as gay, recognition from the white Dutch community can only follow when this individual fits a certain image of what is imagined as gay by Dutch standards, i.e. being openly out, participating in the Gay Pride Parade, and being in need of protection of their heterosexual brothers.<sup>25</sup> This shows the influence that populist rhetoric of pro-gay anti-immigrant has on the broader public and to some extent the gay and lesbian communities themselves.

From reviewing the existing literature, it becomes clear that there is little research that addresses the adoption of anti-immigrant rhetoric with a focus on sexuality by mainstream parties such as CDA and PvdA. Populist, restrictive, anti-immigration ideas have been adopted by more mainstream parties and populist parties have used pro-gay politics to push their anti-immigration policies. Despite this fact, the use of pro-gay anti-immigrant political rhetoric by mainstream parties remains under-researched.

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<sup>22</sup> Shield, *Immigrants in the Sexual Revolution*.

<sup>23</sup> Gloria Wekker, *White Innocence: Paradoxes of Colonialism and Race*, (Durham and London: Duke University Press 2016).

<sup>24</sup> Wekker, *White Innocence*, 166.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 168.

## Material and Method

This research uses archival material from the parties LPF, PVV, VVD, CDA, and PvdA. Both party programs and party manifestos are analyzed. Additionally, media sources are used to supplement the official party documents. These include interviews with politicians, debates, and written work and speeches of party representatives. All material dates between 1997 and 2017. Sources are analyzed by applying discourse analysis to examine whether and how PGAIR is used by mainstream parties and hence if a shift from the populist right to the mainstream has occurred.

Party programs are accessed through the archive of the Dutch national parties, 'Documentatiecentrum Nederlandse Politieke Partijen' at the Rijksuniversiteit Groningen. Through this archive, material from all political parties in the Netherlands can be accessed online. The party programs analyzed are from 2002, 2003, 2006, 2010, and 2012, the years which national elections were held in the Netherlands.

To widen the scope of the analysis, in addition to archival material, publicly accessible transcripts of speeches, interviews, and debates will also be analyzed. These, mostly media based, documents are accessed through political parties' websites under the media section, and through online searches for news reports related to the LGBTQ community and integration in the Netherlands. These media sources expose less scripted ideas of party representatives—such as the party leaders or party president—and may expose different information or opinions that are prevalent within the party. Voters are interested in the opinions of party representatives because their opinions can have an impact on the implementation of the party program.<sup>26</sup> Parliamentary debates are excluded from the scope of the analysis for they are not as widely viewed by the public as compared to newspaper articles or TV news shows. Parliamentary debates only became accessible to the public digitally since 2010 which limits the scope of the viewers before that time significantly.

The method used to analyze the sources is two-fold. First, the terms pro-gay, anti-immigrants and pro-gay anti-immigrant, as used by populist parties, are defined. Second, how and where the PGAIR is found within mainstream parties. The influence of populist party rhetoric on the mainstream parties will be measured by analyzing party documents, speeches, interviews, and

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<sup>26</sup> Zeynep Somer Topcu, 'Agree or disagree: how do party leaders changes affect the distribution of voters' perceptions', *Party Politics*, 23:1, (2017) 66-75, 67.

debates of mainstream party representatives. Sources are analyzed between the period of 2000 and 2017, by looking at how populist parties vis-à-vis mainstream parties address their vision on LGBTQ rights, immigration, and integration. In order to do so, a categorical system consisting of six keys is formulated, to examine whether and how PGAIR is being used. The six keys are divided between the categories directionally defensive and directionally offensive. The directionally defensive keys look at PGAIR oriented from an 'Us' perspective, which is to say, the framing lens is to start at a place of 'Us' making the counter, 'Them.' The classic 'Us' vs. 'Them' mentality, or an offensive rhetorical strategy. The directionally offensive keys look at PGAIR oriented from a 'Them' perspective, which is to say, the framing lens is to start at a place of 'Them' making the counter, 'Us.' Placing 'Us' as in a war of sorts with the 'Them,' in other words, creating a defensive rhetorical strategy. Chapter One will provide a further explanation to what the keys entail and as such what the PGAI connotes.

This analysis incorporates aspects of critical discourse analysis, where attention will be given to power relations within speech. This method will help expose the importance of the potential shift of PGAIR from the populist spheres into the mainstream. Within critical discourse analysis, attention is given to power accessed through language and who has been given a voice. Language is not powerful on its own but rather it gains power by the use powerful people make of it.<sup>27</sup> By using the PGAIR, politicians may continue their dominance over socially marginalized groups: both immigrants and LGBTQ people and the intersections embedded in these. The identities of these groups are structurally used to maintain unequal power relations between those in power who 'belong' and those without power who 'do not belong'. By applying critical discourse analysis it is attempted to illustrate if, and how such a continuum of dominance exists, and to expose the dangers of the mainstreaming of PGAIR in the Netherlands.

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<sup>27</sup> Teun van Dijk, 'Principles of Critical Discourse Analysis', *Discourse and Society*, 4:2 (1993), 249-183, 250.

# Theory

## 1.0 Introduction

This paper traces how populist rhetoric, specifically that rhetoric which is pro-gay *and* anti-immigrant, has found its way into mainstream Dutch political parties. In order to do so, three primary theoretical underpinnings are relied upon. First, are theories on how the often empty-promises of pro-gay rhetoric within politics, as identified by queer theorist and academic Jasbir Puar in her 2016 article, ‘Rethinking Homonationalism,’ can be used to secure and maintain political power (1.1). Second, research by Dutch cultural anthropologist, Stefan Dudink, helps to outline what made the Netherlands leverage pro-gay rhetoric as a means to secure power for new parties and maintain power for established parties as opposed to other rhetorical strategies (1.2). Third, are the rhetorical strategies, identified by Tjitske Akkerman, that political parties can use to defeat their opposition (1.3).<sup>28</sup>

## 1.1 Homonationalism

Homonationalism is a form of sexual politics where sexuality plays a role in ‘othering’ those that do not accept LGBTQ people in the same way self-proclaimed ‘modern’ states do. Mepschen, Duyvendak, and Uitermark elaborate on “sexual othering” in the context of neo-culturalism. Neo-culturalism is a form of cultural protectionism “grounded in a discourse that represents the world as divided into different, inimical cultures and that frames the ‘national cultures’ of Europe as in need of protection against the effects of globalization and immigration”.<sup>29</sup> Homonationalism can be seen as a specific form of this cultural protectionism. The term was first coined by Jasbir K. Puar in 2007 in her book *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times*. She defines homonationalism as “[a] conceptual frame for understanding the complexities of how ‘acceptance’ and ‘tolerance’ for gay and lesbian subjects have become a barometer by which the right to and capacity for national sovereignty is evaluated”.<sup>30</sup> Puar situates homonationalism within the post-9/11 War on Terrorism in

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<sup>28</sup>Akkerman, ‘Immigration policy’.

<sup>29</sup> Paul Mepschen, Jan Willem Duyvendak and Justus Uitermark, ‘Progressive Politics of Exclusion: Dutch Populism, Immigration, and Sexuality,’ *Migration and Citizenship*, 2:1, (2014) 8-12, 8.

<sup>30</sup> Jasbir Puar, *Terrorist assemblages: homonationalism in queer times*. (Durham and London: Duke University Press 2007).

which an othering of — mostly Muslim — immigrants developed. The gay-friendly (Western) nation-states embrace core values of sexual diversity and freedom as an affirmation of their modernity and exceptionalism, while simultaneously dismissing Muslim citizens and immigrants alike to a pre-modern, homophobic, misogynist — and therefore threatening — position.<sup>31</sup> This dichotomous framing feeds into a supposed incompatibility of Islam and ‘the West.’ It is rooted in a generalized, simplistic, and often a false representation of a highly diverse global Muslim community and wrongfully places western liberal democracies as the forefront of modernity and in need of protection from Muslim culture. Since LGBTQ rights have become a Western value LGBTQ people have realigned themselves with nationalist values of patriotism and protectionism. Homonationalism can thus be interpreted as a form of identity politics where LGBTQ subjects use their identity to illustrate the need for protecting the nation and its modern values against backward immigrant cultures.

## 1.2 Homosexuality and Political Rhetoric in the Netherlands

Across Europe, populist parties have used different points of departure for their anti-immigration policies based on what were high-value political topics at the time. For example, in Scandinavia, gender equality is central and in Germany, Christian tradition is central.<sup>32</sup> Populist parties in all of these regions have leveraged the regionally trending socio-political concerns to forward their anti-immigration politics. For, social values can easily be spun to create an ‘us’ versus ‘them’ narrative—a high impact narrative that has shown to be very effective in promoting an anti-immigration agenda.<sup>33</sup>

While a commitment to gender equality and Christian tradition, have also been used by Dutch populist parties, the Dutch political climate of the early 2000s has made LGBTQ rights the

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<sup>31</sup> Fatima el-Tayib, ‘Gays who cannot properly be gay’: Queer Muslim in the neoliberal European city, *European Journal of Women’s Studies*, 19(1) (2012) 79-95, 83.

<sup>32</sup> Verena Lennis and Sine Agergaard, ‘Enacting and resisting the politics of belonging through leisure. The debate about gender-segregated swimming sessions targeting Muslim women in Denmark’, *Leisure Studies*, 37:6, (2018) 706-720; Nicole Berbuir, Marcel Lewandowsky and Jasmin Siri, ‘The AfD and its Sympathisers: Finally a Right-Wing Populist Movement in Germany?’, *German Politics*, 24:2, (2015) 154-178.

<sup>33</sup> Paul Mepschen, Jan Willem Duyvendak, and Justus Uitermark, ‘Progressive Politics of Exclusion: Dutch Populism, Immigration, and Sexuality’, *Migration and Citizenship*, 2:1, (2014), 8-12, 8.

most significant political tool ever since.<sup>34</sup> And like gender equality to Scandinavia, discussing LGBTQ rights became a central tactic for framing the need to reduce, restrict, and generally be cautious towards immigration—otherwise known as an anti-immigration perspective.

Gay rights have been an important social value in the Netherlands since the mid-twentieth century. The Netherlands has been at the forefront of LGBTQ emancipation in the world. As early as 1969 LGBTQ people demonstrated in the Netherlands for the equalization of the age of consent for same-sex relations. Same-sex couples could officially register their partnership in 1998. And in 2001 The Netherlands became the first country to legalize same-sex marriage.<sup>35</sup> Activism from within and outside the LGBTQ community has led sexual equality to become an important barometer of progressiveness within the Dutch political debate.

In the late 1990s, there was a growing dissatisfaction of the fragmented political climate. Between 1994 and 2002, the Netherlands had been governed by a coalition of liberal and socio-democratic parties which, according to critics, led to an abandoning of moral principles. In the 1990s the Dutch political culture of compromises became a frame of conflict over multiculturalism. Critics of multiculturalism blamed consociational democracy for the failed integration of immigrants and for preventing a debate about this failure. The nation was to be united by non-negotiable moral principles and a confrontation with those cultures thought to be unwilling to adapt.<sup>36</sup>

Dudink explains how the combination of the history of LGBTQ emancipation and dissatisfaction of the political landscape at the time supported each other in making gay rights the central issue for populist parties to promote their anti-immigration agenda.<sup>37</sup> While it is clear that the Netherlands was well set up for pro-gay rhetoric to be leveraged for political gain, it wasn't until academic Pim Fortuyn first introduced homosexuality as central to the argument against consociational democracy—a form of politics characterized by power sharing through compromises—that the link between pro-gay rhetoric and political agendas in the Netherlands can be annotated.<sup>38</sup> In his 1997 book *The Islamization of our Culture: Dutch Identity as a foundation* Fortuyn explained how he believed that secularism, which is to say the separation of church and state and an overall decline in

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<sup>34</sup> Dudink, A queer nodal point, 3.

<sup>35</sup> Marlou Schrover, 'Policy Changes in Homosexual Immigrant Rights' (submitted).

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Dudink, A queer nodal point, 3.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.



religious piety within society, was responsible for homosexuals acquiring equal rights within Dutch society.<sup>39</sup> After the publication of his book, the already well-established moral-norm of acceptance of homosexuality became central in the debate on multiculturalism and Islam in the Netherlands, effectively birthing a social belief that firstly, the acceptance of homosexuality was a specifically Dutch value, and that secondly, Islam was unaccepting of homosexuality and therefore incompatible with Dutch cultural values.

Starting with the publication of his book in 1997 until his death in 2002, Fortuyn opposed consociational politics by his unwillingness to compromise on the issue of gay rights and illustrated his perceived threat to his safety and the safety of all homosexuals in the Netherlands by giving examples from his own life as an openly gay man, specifically citing Muslims as responsible for the decreasing safety of gays.<sup>40</sup> The rise of Fortuyn in the political landscape and his homonationalist rhetoric more largely in the socio-political debate at the turn of the millennium facilitated homosexuality coming to represent the non-negotiable moral principle that consociational democracy seemed to lack within the Dutch political conversation. Additionally, international geopolitical events happening at the time played into the lure of Fortuyn's argument. The attacks of 9/11 increased the West's distrust of immigrants generally, but Muslim immigrants particularly.

Not only the attacks in the United States but also in the Netherlands current affairs contributed to the debate on Islam and the West. In 2001, the Rotterdam Imam El Moumni spoke out against homosexuality which created unrest within Dutch society. In the widely watched TV-show NOVA, he stated that being gay is a disease that should be stopped from spreading.<sup>41</sup> However, the media played a big part in the framing of his statements as part of the interview, where the Imam condemned the violence against gays, was cut.<sup>42</sup> The events around the Imam, according to Fortuyn, represented a line that had to be drawn between Dutch norms and values and those of

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<sup>39</sup> Pim Fortuyn, *Tegen Islamisering van onze Cultuur: Nederlandse identiteit als Fundament* (Rotterdam Karakter Uitgevers 1997)61-78.

<sup>40</sup> Fortuyn, *Tegen Islamisering van onze Cultuur*

<sup>41</sup>'Reactie van Liberalen op imam getuigt van zelfgenoegzaamheid' *De Volkskrant*, 18-05-2001, <https://www.volkskrant.nl/nieuws-achtergrond/reactie-van-liberalen-op-imam-getuigt-van-zelfgenoegzaamheid~bf410e6b>

<sup>42</sup>Justus Uitermark, Paul Mepschen and Jan Willem Duyvendak, 'Populism, Sexual Politics, and the Exclusion of Muslims in the Netherlands. In John Bowen, Christopher Bertossi, Jan Willem Duyvendak, & Mona Lena Krook (Eds.), *European States and their Muslim Citizens: The Impact of Institutions on Perceptions and Boundaries* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press) 235-255, 243.

their enemies — by which he meant Muslims. The political rhetoric of the non-negotiable nature of acceptance and equal treatment of homosexuality hence became linked to a critique of consociational politics and was severely enhanced by the media attention. This allowed Pim Fortuyn to take up an influential role in Dutch politics.

Homonationalism can be found all over the world. Countries like Israel, the United States, and South Africa have used Homonationalism as a strategy to not only gain favor domestically but also internationally.<sup>43</sup> By promoting LGBTQ acceptance in their country they attempt to change their international identity from oppressive to progressive. The Netherlands is different from these nations in that homonationalism has been applied most notably, though not exclusively, in an effort to influence domestic opinion and politics.

### **1.3 Political Strategies**

This section explains how in the Netherlands, populist rhetoric, and specifically gay rights, have been used to influence domestic politics and opinions. Three rhetorical strategies, identified by Tjitske Akkerman, that political parties can use to defeat their opposition are discussed.

Akkerman identifies three strategies by which parties can respond programmatically to the electoral success of (populist) competitors. First, parties can make the key issues of the competitor seem less relevant. This is difficult because the issues of the competitor are usually dependent on news, events and contemporary issues in society. Individual parties cannot easily change the attention these issues receive. Second, parties can reconsider their own position to align with the position of populist parties. Reconsidering the position of an entire party is difficult because parties, especially mainstream parties, are rooted in ideologies that usually have defined a party for many years. Third, parties use a mixed strategy. Here, they may adopt populist positions on immigration and integration policies in some respect while holding on to their position in other aspects.<sup>44</sup> Akkerman has found that in Europe, some parties on the mainstream right, such as VVD, have adopted this strategy regarding immigration which resulted in stricter immigration policies. Mainstream parties do not have coherent positions on immigration but rather mix positions of

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<sup>43</sup> Tomaaso M. Milani and Erez Levon, 'Sexing diversity: linguistic landscapes of homonationalism', *Language and Communication* 51, (2016), 69-86.

<sup>44</sup> Akkerman, Immigration policy, 55

cosmopolitanism and nationalism in order to bridge conflicting policy preferences among their overlapping followers. She found that mainstream parties in the Netherlands, VVD, and CDA, compete rhetorically with the PVV by emphasizing national identity issues and align themselves with some of the PVV policy positions.<sup>45</sup> In this way, they can show their voters that the central issues of immigration, integration and national identity core to the PVV are also addressed in their party. Akkerman found there to be less incentive on the mainstream left to move rightwards and no consistent decisions on increasingly restrictive immigration and integration policies. Building on the work of Akkerman this thesis also analyzes the mainstream left party, PvdA, to see if a shift in rhetoric regarding PGAI occurs.

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<sup>45</sup> Akkerman, *Impact of Populist Radical-Right*.

## PART TWO

### CHAPTER ONE: From Homonationalism to Pro-Gay Anti-Immigrant Rhetoric

#### 1.0 Introduction

Chapter One tracks the addition of *pro-gay anti-immigrant* (PGAI) rhetoric to the Dutch political arena. After an objectively short instance of *homonationalist* rhetoric being the exclusive form of PGAIR within Dutch politics, between 2001-2002 (see section 1.3), heterosexual politicians began employing PGAIR. - A chronological examination of use cases of PGAIR within Dutch politics shows how throughout the 2000s and early 2010s PGAIR became an increasingly significant strategy for acquiring and maintaining political power. Each case also underscores what PGAIR in Dutch politics was comprised of between 2002 and 2017.

#### 1.1 Defining PGAIR

To best understand what **PGAIR** is within Dutch politics, looking at the terms separately from one another is important. For, while at face value ‘pro-gay anti-immigrant’ as a term is quite straight forward, both aspects of the dual-sided PGAIRal strategy are quite nuanced.

#### PRO-GAY RHETORIC

Pro-gay rhetoric employed in the context of Dutch politics is that speech which promotes the equal standing of gays<sup>46</sup> to heterosexuals, and women to men.<sup>47</sup> What each area of the Dutch

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<sup>46</sup> In Dutch, the populists use the term ‘homo’ which translates to homosexual in English. The term homosexual can sometimes be seen as derogatory and therefore is approached with an awareness of its connotation in English. There is yet to be an established neutral lexicon for discussing LGBTQ identity. LGBTQ is not the correct term as it is not what populists are referring to when speaking about gay people. Gay is, therefore, the chosen translation for the Dutch translation of ‘homo’ as used by populists.

<sup>47</sup>Women in this research are included under the rubric gays because it is thought that women’s emancipation precedes that of gays. Progressiveness in Dutch politics of the early 2000s is hence no longer characterized by emancipation of women, but rather by the emancipation of gays. By being pro-gay one is thus inherently pro-women.

political sphere means by gay is radically different, and is the first place where we see the nuance of a seemingly clear pro-gay sentiment come in to play. When the Dutch political left, for example ‘GroenLinks’ or ‘Bij1’, use pro-gay rhetoric they are referring to LGBT and Q identities, whether they be Dutch or immigrant, independent of race and creed, independent of political affiliation. Additionally, the left is active in creating legislation that furthers the rights of all LGBTQs who live within the Netherlands independent of their status. Which is to say, politically left Pro-gay rhetoric is not only propagandic in nature but is followed through on in policy advocacy. This is a significant difference to the Dutch Populist parties who present homosexuality as something which is fully accepted in Dutch society and use the ‘acceptance’ of homosexuality in the Netherlands as an example of Dutch Liberal Values which need to be celebrated openly not only by members of the LGBTQ community but by all Dutch.

When Populist parties use ‘pro-gay’ rhetoric, they are most likely only referring to gay men and lesbians and are unlikely to be referring to trans or bi or queer individuals. They are also unlikely to be referring to anyone on the LGBTQ spectrum who isn’t white and Dutch. Pro-gay in populist rhetoric is selectively pro-gay; it does not consider those who are not gay or lesbian (bi, trans, and queer) nor does it consider the intersection between immigrant, non-Judeo-Christian or humanist, and non-white identities.<sup>48</sup> As such, while gay-acceptance is presented as a shared Dutch value by Dutch populist party rhetoric, the gay-acceptance they speak of is exclusive to those who they consider ‘native’ Dutch. Additionally, Populist parties nearly always use pro-gay speech in the context of an oppositional value which they want to create legislation or policies. For example, pro-gay rhetoric merged with anti-immigration rhetoric as opposed to simply using pro-gay rhetoric alone in support of creating legislation that supports the equal standing gay men and lesbians.

## **ANTI-IMMIGRANT RHETORIC**

Anti-immigrant rhetoric employed in the context of Dutch politics is speech which advocates for the closing of borders and legislation that limits the rights of certain individuals who reside in the Netherlands based on either religion, or region, or origin, or race. While left political

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<sup>48</sup> Formulated differently, populist pro-gay rhetoric is not rhetoric that is, for example, envisioning a trans black Muslim immigrant.

parties, such as GroenLinks (GreenLeft) or Bij1(Together), infrequently use anti-immigrant rhetoric, when they do so, they are often referring to immigrants from any place outside of the Netherlands.

Populist parties, in contrast, are almost exclusively referring to immigrants from Muslim backgrounds or Middle Eastern countries. Another way to look at the difference between how the political left and populists think about immigrants is to examine what they mean when they use the word ‘Dutch.’<sup>49</sup> The Dutch political left mostly uses ‘Dutch’ to refer to any permanent or naturalized residents, independent of where they were born, what religion they practice, what language they speak, what race they are. Dutch populist parties, on the other hand, while they are sometimes cautious in saying this explicitly when using the term ‘Dutch’ are referring to white residents who were born in the Netherlands and consider themselves Christian, Jewish, or secular. It can be argued that the sentiment goes even further, that when ‘Dutch’ is said by populist parties there is an expectation that the ‘Dutchness’ goes back generations and is a deeply Western European identity.<sup>50</sup>

#### **PRO-GAY ANTI-IMMIGRANT RHETORIC**

PGAIR is dependent on creating a dichotomy of two concepts that are ‘incompatible.’ The pro-gay aspect of the PGAI term is used within Dutch populist politics to illustrate an idea of ‘Us.’ The anti-immigrant aspect of the PGAI term is used within Dutch politics to illustrate an idea of ‘Them.’ The ‘Them’ being the (mostly) Middle Eastern, Muslim, non-white resident regardless of if they are permanent residents, naturalized, were born in Holland, or born abroad; ‘immigrant’ and ‘allochthonous’ are terms used to refer to this ‘Them.’ This ‘Them’ is also understood to be inherently anti-gay.<sup>51</sup>

This is a constructed dichotomy, for it is neither true that all those who fit into the populist idea of ‘Dutch,’ the ‘Us’ side of the dichotomy, as it were, are pro-gay, even in the narrow sense of equality for gay men. Nor is it true in any capacity that the ‘Them’ side, those who are non-white, Muslim, or hail from Middle Eastern backgrounds, are anti-gay. Herein is the power of the false

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<sup>49</sup> Wekker, *White Innocence*

<sup>50</sup> Paul Mepschen, Jan Willem Duyvendak, and Justus Uitermark, ‘Progressive Politics of Exclusion: Dutch Populism, Immigration, and Sexuality, Migration, and Citizenship, 2:1, (2014), 235-255

<sup>51</sup> Dvora Yanow and Marleen van der Haar, ‘People out of place: Allochthony and autochthony in Netherlands identity discourse – metaphors and categories in action’, *Journal of International Relations and Development*, 16(2), (2011) 227–261; Mepschen, Duyvendak and Tonkens., *Sexual Politics*.

dichotomy of PGAIR: it does not actually matter who supports whom, it matters who can leverage pro-gay sentiment and anti-immigrant sentiment for political power acquisition and maintenance, which can be understood as propagandic as opposed to legitimate. This is achieved by one of six keys and is always directional:

### **KEYS 1-3: DIRECTIONALLY OFFENSIVE 'US' vs. 'THEM'**

First, PGAIR can be oriented from an 'Us' perspective, which is to say, the framing lens is to start at a place of 'Us' making the counter, 'Them.' The classic 'Us' vs. 'Them' mentality, or an offensive rhetorical strategy.

#### **1. KEY ONE: *Highlighting the Judeo-Christian and Humanistic Tradition***

By using this key it is suggested that:

- a. Dutch society is built on the three traditions that were historically present in the Netherlands: Judaism, Christianity, and Humanism.
- b. The Judeo-Christian and Humanistic tradition have allowed for a secularization where Church and State became separated.
- c. Secular society is the modern form of society that subsequently has allowed for the emancipation for LGBTQ people and women as modern values.

#### **2. KEY TWO: *Praising the Emancipation of LGBTQ People***

By using this key it is suggested that:

- a. Within Dutch society, LGBTQ people enjoy the same rights as heterosexual identifying residents.
- b. LGBTQ people can be open about their sexual or gender identity in the Netherlands.
- c. Identifying as LGBTQ and being in a same-sex relationship is normal in Dutch society.

### **3. KEY THREE: *Praising the Emancipation of Women***

By using this key it is suggested that:

- a. Women enjoy equal rights to men in the Netherlands.
- b. Women have agency over their bodies in the Netherlands.
- c. Women do not have to fear men in the Netherlands.
- d. The equality between men and women is considered normal in the Netherlands.

### **KEYS 4-6: DIRECTIONALLY DEFENSIVE ‘THEM’ vs. ‘US’**

Second, PGAIR can be oriented from a ‘Them’ perspective, which is to say, the framing lens is to start at a place of ‘Them’ making the counter, ‘Us.’ Placing ‘Us’ as in a war of sorts with the ‘Them,’ in other words, creating a defensive rhetorical strategy.

This is opposed by ‘Them’ presented as a backward culture illustrated by:

### **4. KEY FOUR: *Problematization of Islam***

By using this key it is suggested that:

- a. Islam is a conservative religion where political decisions are rooted in the Islamic tradition and beliefs that are limiting the freedom of Muslims.
- b. Islam is a religion that cannot be separated from the state, leaving no space for people not to be Muslim.
- c. Islam has withheld societies from the emancipation processes for women and LGBTQ people.

### **5. KEY FIVE: *Discrimination of LGBTQ People***

By using this key it is suggested that:

- a. There is no space for identities other than heterosexual identities within Muslim communities.
- b. LGBTQ people do not enjoy equal rights as straight people within Muslim communities.



- c. The discrimination of LGBTQ people leads to aggression towards those who do identify as such.

## **6. KEY SIX: *Discrimination of Women***

By using this key it is suggested that:

- a. Women are suppressed within Muslim communities.
- b. Women do not enjoy equal rights as men within Muslim communities.
- c. Women who do not adhere to traditional gender roles or expectations face aggression.

### **1.2 Pre-2001: The History of Islamophobia in the Netherlands**

The attitude towards Muslims in the Netherlands has been politicized since the Early Modern Period. During the Ottoman Period (1568-1648) the area that is now known as the Netherlands was occupied by the Catholic Spanish king, Philip II. King Phillip II's persecuted Dutch Protestants who in protest aligned themselves symbolically with the Turks of the Ottoman Empire. The Dutch stood with the tolerant Ottoman Empire, who allowed more freedom of religion, and in this way strengthened exchange with the Muslim world.<sup>52</sup> Later, during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when maintaining a tolerant and supportive relationship with Muslims was of arguably political importance again, the Dutch reacted distinctly differently. This time, instead of creating an alliance with an Islamic governmental entity as they had done with the Ottoman Empire, the Dutch were welcoming Muslim residents from their colonial territory, the Dutch East Indies (modern-day Indonesia). And while projecting an image of religious tolerance had been a core tenet of Dutch culture, they denied requests from their new Muslim residents for a mosque or religious graveyard and created limitations on personal liberties that differed from the already established Christian residents.<sup>53</sup> Early attempts to establish mosques, were unsuccessful until the 1960s when mostly Muslim guest laborers, especially from Turkey, Morocco, and Yugoslavia, arrived and subsequently

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<sup>52</sup> Umar Ryad, “‘Rather Turkish than Papist’: Islam as a political force in the Dutch Low Countries in the Early Modern Period”, *The Muslim World* 10 (2017) 714-736.

<sup>53</sup> Umar Ryad, ‘Among the Believers in the Land of the Colonizer: Mohammed Ali van Beetem’s Role Among the Indonesian Community in the Netherlands in the Interwar Period’, *Journal of Religion in Europe* 5 (2012) 273–310.

settled more permanently in the Netherlands. Even though this new wave of Muslim immigrants was granted more religious institutional support than previous waves of Muslim immigrants, Muslims were still perceived with ambivalence in Dutch society.

The family reunification of the guest laborers, in the late 1970-1980s, allowed workers to resettle their immediate family (mostly wives and children) more permanently in the Netherlands. As a reaction to this neo-culturalism rooted in anti-Islam sentiment grew in the Netherlands.<sup>54</sup> The breakthrough of neo-culturalism came in 1991 when VVD politician Frits Bolkestein published an opinion piece in *De Volkskrant*:

*Islam is not just a religion; it is a way of life. And as such, it is at odds with the liberal division between church and state. Many Islamic countries have hardly any freedom of speech. The Salman Rushdie affair is perhaps an extreme case but it shows how much we differ from one another in these matters.*<sup>55</sup>

Bolkestein set the tone for a divided society where he distinguishes between the ‘Us,’ exemplified in the last sentence in this excerpt where he uses the term ‘we,’ as a contrast to the implied ‘other,’ people who practice Islam or come from an Islamic country or society. This quote is one of the earliest examples of an anti-immigrant rhetoric instance of the ‘Us’ vs. ‘Them’ narrative that has since become commonplace in the Dutch political arena. Bolkestein also reveals a belief in the secular, and that it is a value which is inherent ‘Dutch.’ In doing so, he also creates a narrative where Muslim religion and life are so intertwined that they are inherently anti-secular. All in an effort to illustrate a contrived ‘incompatibility’ between the two cultures. Bolkestein had brought anti-Islam sentiment into the political arena. However, Neo-culturalism rooted in sexual politics was introduced by Pim Fortuyn. In 1997 his book, *Tegen de Islamisering van onze Cultuur* (Against the Islamization of our Culture), his homonationalist rhetoric exposes how in his opinion, Islam is a threat to gay-emancipation in the Netherlands.<sup>56</sup> The book dedicates one chapter to gay rights and women’s rights. Here, Fortuyn describes the liberalization and emancipation of gays and women in the

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<sup>54</sup> Paul Mepschen, Jan Willem Duyvendak, and Justus Uitermark, ‘Progressive Politics of Exclusion: Dutch Populism, Immigration, and Sexuality, Migration, and Citizenship, 2:1, (2014), 235-255, 238.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 239. (All translations are by self)

<sup>56</sup> Fortuyn, *Tegen de Islamisering*.

Netherlands where the separation of church and state is core. He positions liberalization in contrast to Islamic cultures that remain religiously conservative, and hence inferior to Dutch culture:

*The history of the emancipation of women and homosexuals in the Netherlands should not be a terra incognita, not for native Dutch people nor for Dutch people who still live wholly or partly in their original Islamic culture. On the basis of this debate, borders need to be drawn between what is absolutely not possible and what can be tolerated.*<sup>57</sup>

Here, Fortuyn positions gay rights (and women's rights) as his non-negotiable point, which is typical of PGAIR, and explains that he believes that Muslim values do not align with his ideas about the emancipation of gays and women.

Until 2001, Fortuyn was solely an academic and opinion-maker. As such, his ideas remained mostly limited to readers in the field of academia. Then, when Pim Fortuyn became the leader of the populist party, 'Leefbaar Nederland' (Livable Netherlands) which was founded in 1999, homonationalist rhetoric entered the political arena, and as such gained an audience outside of academia for the first time in Dutch socio-political history.

### **1.3 2001-2002: Pim Fortuyn, Leefbaar Nederland, LPF**

The newly established Leefbaar Nederland received a lot of attention from the media, in many ways because the party leader, Pim Fortuyn, an open and flamboyant gay man, used his sexual identity as a rhetorical device, which at the time, was unheard of in Dutch politics. With his use of sexual identity as a rhetorical tool also came his populist and anti-immigrant rhetoric, making him the first Dutch politician to employ homonationalist rhetoric. And he wasn't shy about his ambition for his political ideology. In a 2001 interview with the Dutch weekly, *Elsevier*, Fortuyn announced his desire to become prime minister. The interview set the tone for his populist ideas and what was to become his notorious criticism of Islam:

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 77.

*You must see the mosques as an umbrella organization. Which means: control everything that is said there. A fundamentalist who calls our women whores and the gays less than pigs, is next in line. Then, we must step in. Period.*<sup>58</sup>

This quotation makes clear how Fortuyn perceives the Islamic community and the value that he accredits to them: dangerous due to cultural differences. This assumed cultural difference reads hierarchical, where Dutch values are inherently superior to other cultural value. This hierarchy is part of the homonationalist rhetoric—which is a subcategory of PGAIR—for Fortuyn uses his identity as a gay man exemplify this.

After only three months of being Leefbaar Nederland's party leader, from November 2001 to February 2002, Fortuyn was removed from the party due to a controversial interview that ran in the newspaper, *De Volkskrant*.<sup>59</sup> In the interview, Fortuyn criticized Islam, disclosed his desire to close the Dutch borders to refugees and immigrants, and called for an abolishment of Article 1<sup>60</sup> of the Dutch constitution, which includes the prohibition of discrimination.<sup>61</sup>

*I have no desire to repeat the emancipation of women and homosexuals. In high schools, there are numerous homosexual teachers, who, due to Turkish and Moroccan boys, are afraid to come out about their identity. I think that is a shame.*<sup>62</sup>

and

*I do not hate Islam. I think it is a backward culture. I have traveled a lot in the world. And everywhere Islam rules, it is just awful. All the ambiguity. It reminds me of those old reformists [Protestants]. Reformist always lie. And why is that? Because they have a system of norms and values that are too hard to live up to. You see the same in that Muslim culture.*<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> 'Ik ga in het Catshuis regeren', *Elsevier*, 01-09-2001

<sup>59</sup>Parlementair Documentatie Centrum, 'Lijst Pim Fortuyn'  
[https://www.parlement.com/id/vh8lnhrp1wzo/lijt\\_pim\\_fortuyn\\_lpf](https://www.parlement.com/id/vh8lnhrp1wzo/lijt_pim_fortuyn_lpf) (15-05-2019).

<sup>60</sup> Article 1 of the constitution states: "All persons in the Netherlands shall be treated equally in equal circumstances. Discrimination on the grounds of religion, belief, political opinion, race or sex or on any other grounds whatsoever shall not be permitted". De Nederlandse Grondwet, 'Artikel 1: Gelijke behandeling en discriminatieverbod', [https://www.denederlandsegrondwet.nl/id/vi7pkisz82r9/artikel\\_1\\_gelijke\\_behandeling\\_en](https://www.denederlandsegrondwet.nl/id/vi7pkisz82r9/artikel_1_gelijke_behandeling_en) (05-06-2019).

<sup>61</sup> 'Pim Fortuyn op de herhaling de islam is een achterlijke cultuur', *De Volkskrant*, 09-02-2002.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

and

*Just look at the Netherlands. In which other countries could a party leader of such a large movement as mine, be an open homosexual? How fantastic that this is possible here. We can be proud of that. And I wish for it stay like that.*<sup>64</sup>

Fortuyn uses his identity as a gay man to illustrate the threat he feels he is under as a gay man. His interview defines several of the key elements of homonationalist rhetoric.

In the first quotation, Fortuyn uses Keys 5(a) and 2(a, c). His defensive framing plots specifically Turkish and Moroccan men, and their implied Muslim identity, as a direct threat the position and safety of openly gay individuals in Dutch Society. There is a precedent for using Turkish and Moroccan identities as a shorthand for Muslim identity. When Turks and Moroccans immigrated to the Netherlands as a part of a guest worker program in the 1960s, a high percentage of them were Muslim and later ‘Turkish’ and ‘Moroccan’ became synonymous with Muslim in Dutch colloquial rhetoric.<sup>65</sup>

In the second quote, Fortuyn distinguishes between a ‘we,’ which seems to imply the ‘Dutch native,’ and ‘they,’ the Muslim immigrants. Again, his framing is in the defensive, admonishing Islam rather than praising Dutch culture. This is a prime example of Key 4(a,b), where it is believed that Muslim immigrants have an inferior and anti-secular culture which puts the Dutch superior and secular culture in jeopardy.

In the last quotation, which was said directly after the second quote (which is to say, the visual separation between the two quotes is for analytical purposes only) Fortuyn employs Key 1c: the offensive, and celebratory, leveraging of Dutch cultural values, those secular and supportive of the continued emancipation of gays and women, as superior to the implied Muslim values, which, according to Fortuyn, do not allow for said emancipation.

What is notable about Fortuyn’s *De Volkskrant* interview is that, in lumping Turks and Moroccans together only to serve the purpose of evoking the idea of a Muslim, the fact that there may be Christian, Jewish, or secular; LGBTQ people; or even Dutch identifying Turks and Moroccans gets completely overlooked. The interview led to Fortuyn’s removal of Leefbaar

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> Shield, *Sexual Politics*, 249.

Nederland. In the aftermath of, and as a direct response to, his *De Volkskrant* interview-motivated removal from Leefbaar Nederland, Fortuyn started his own political party: 'Lijst Pim Fortuyn' (List Pim Fortuyn (LPF)).

LPF was established on February 16, 2002. On May 15, 2002, national parliamentary elections took place.<sup>66</sup> The LPF's founder, Pim Fortuyn, now a widely known figure after his three-month-long stint as the leader of the Leefbaar Nederland party, was regularly using homonationalist rhetoric to promote his agenda, and in a bid for obtaining political power. Nine days before the elections, on May 6, 2002, Pim Fortuyn was murdered by an animal-rights activist. Despite the death of the party's founder, LPF participated in the May 15th elections.

### **PGAIR AND THE LPF**

After Fortuyn's death, the LPF no longer applied homonationalist rhetorical strategies, for no one in party leadership was openly gay. However, they continued to use homonationalist rhetoric's umbrella rhetorical strategy: PGAIR. In fact, their first party program of eight pages included one full page dedicated to integration and immigration policy objectives—a large amount of space to dedicate to the topic relative to other parties. Comparatively, during the same year, the VVD allocated less than half a page to integration and migration in their fifty-two-page program, and the CDA allocated approximately one page in their forty-four-page program.

Within the LPF's inaugural party program we find two statements on integration and migration that especially illustrate their populist vision and glimpses of their readiness to implement PGAIR:

*Cultural development counter to the desired integration and emancipation, such as arranged marriage, honor killings, and female circumcision, are to be combated by law and education. Especially the discrimination against women in fundamentalist Islamic circles is to be combated.*<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>66</sup>Parlementair Documentatie Centrum, 'Lijst Pim Fortuyn' [https://www.parlement.com/id/vh8lnhrp1wzo/lijt\\_pim\\_fortuyn\\_lpf](https://www.parlement.com/id/vh8lnhrp1wzo/lijt_pim_fortuyn_lpf) (15-05-2019).

<sup>67</sup> Het Documentatiecentrum Nederlandse Politieke Partijen (further: DNPP), Archive LPF, 'Partijprogramma: Zakelijk met een Hart', 2002, 5, <http://irs.ub.rug.nl/dbi/4c728d4bb21cb>

This quote draws a connection between the LPF's restrictionist policy ideas on immigration and their call for protection of the 'Dutch norms and values.' In this quote, what could be considered a Key 4a, the LPF underscores their position that Islam, including its practices of arranged marriage, honor killings, female circumcision, is counter to Dutch culture. Interestingly, what the LPF refers to as gay people (LBT and Q identities are not in their lexicon during this period) are not mentioned in their 2002 party program. Only the emancipation and safety of women is explicitly mentioned. The program does imply that there is a difference in cultural development between Dutch culture and immigrant culture where Dutch culture is desired and cultural development that counters those same ideals is to be combatted.<sup>68</sup> This is central to PGAIR.

In 2002, LPF received 17% of the vote, an unusually high number of votes for a new party, which translated into 26 of the 150 seats in the 2002 House of Representatives.<sup>69</sup> The party was included in the coalition formation. The coalition between 2002 and 2003 was made up of VVD, CDA, and LPF. Together they wrote a strategic plan—typically, with few exceptions, called 'regeerakkoord' (govern-agreement). The strategic plan places a strong emphasis on policy proposals regarding migration and integration, LGBTQ people, Muslims, and Islam were all not mentioned in the document in any capacity. The coalition lasted only 87 days. After this historically short coalition period, CDA and VVD lost their trust in the stability of the LPF. This caused the coalition to collapse, which according to Dutch law, required a new election to reestablish a majority in the House of Representatives. New elections were held on January 22, 2003.

In 2003, the LPF was led for the second time by Mat Herber, who stepped forward after the murder of Fortuyn, and a new party program was composed. The new LPF party program allocated significant space to policy proposals on immigration and integration, this time again explicitly mentioning Islam as a challenge to the perceived Dutch cultural norms and values. Again, there are no references to LGBTQ rights or emancipation. In fact, after Fortuyn's death, while many identifiable traits of PGAIR can be found in instances of LPF speech, none of his successors explicitly mentioned LGBTQ emancipation or rights or leveraged the topic to exemplify the incompatibility between Dutch and immigrant cultures. In the January 2003 election, the LPF

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> Parlementair Documentatie Centrum, 'Kabinet Balkenende in 2002-2003', [https://www.parlement.com/id/vh8lnhrpfxup/kabinet\\_balkenende\\_i\\_2002\\_2003](https://www.parlement.com/id/vh8lnhrpfxup/kabinet_balkenende_i_2002_2003) (15-5-2019).

received 5.7 percent of the vote, leaving them with 18 seats less than the preceding year, a total of eight seats. Consequently, the party was not included in that year's coalition. In 2006, the party began its stark decline, receiving only 0.2 percent of the votes, which gave them no seats. The party ceased to exist in 2007.

The LPF was built on Fortuyn's homonationalist ideals but ceased to operate on homonationalist rhetorical platform after his death. This change in rhetoric could be explained by the new heterosexual party leader, who could not leverage his sexual identity politics in the same way as his predecessor and quite possibly, did not share Fortuyn's ideas about LGBTQ rights. After LPF disappeared from the political arena, Geert Wilders took its place and transformed the seedlings of PGAIR that were planted in the early years of the LPF, in Fortuyn's homonationalist rhetoric and party programs, into full-fledged PGAIR.

#### **1.4 Geert Wilders' pro-gay anti-immigration rhetoric**

This section will outline the rise of the PVV from Wilder's diversion from the VVD to an established independent populist party. Wilders founded his party to, in his opinion, fill a gap on the political right, and in this sense followed in the footsteps of Pim Fortuyn who followed the same route as Wilders in 2001. PGAIR has been an essential tool to define PVV's identity as a populist party. The party first competed in the national election in 2006 and used PGAIR, but not explicitly pro-gay arguments, and won 9 seats. In 2010, the PVV explicitly used pro-gay arguments as part of their PGAIR and won an increased number of seats which lifted them from a party on the political fringe to a serious competitor to mainstream parties. Which they remain to be until current day.

Geert Wilders started his own party after he left as a member of the VVD in 2004.<sup>70</sup> Wilders established the 'Partij voor de Vrijheid' (Party for Freedom) in 2006 and competed in the national elections in the same year. The PVV is a populist party which is primarily concerned with creating restrictive migration policy, measures against (proclaimed) Islamization, and decreased participation

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<sup>70</sup> Wilder lefts the VVD after an internal dispute regarding a ten-point manifesto with the aim to shift the VVD's position more to the right. This manifesto included the deportation of radical Imams and a stance against Turkey ever joining the EU. The VVD party president urged Wilders to not divert from VVD's standpoints to which Wilders responded by leaving the party.

Parlimentair Documentatie Centrum, 'Afsplitsing Geert Wilder (2004)', [https://www.parlement.com/id/vkdoobr4qkitx/afsplitsing\\_geert\\_wilders\\_2004](https://www.parlement.com/id/vkdoobr4qkitx/afsplitsing_geert_wilders_2004) (30-05-2019).



in the European Union. In 2006, the PVV received 5.9 percent of the vote and earned itself 9 seats in the House of Representatives. The 2006 party program outlines a strong dichotomy between ‘Dutch culture’ and ‘Immigrant culture’ (which is interchangeably addressed as Turkish, Moroccan, or Islamic culture):

*The Netherlands is a country that is proud of their own identity, that dares to name this identity and dares to stand up for its preservation.*<sup>71</sup>

and

*An immigration stop for non-western allochthonous (Turkish and Moroccan) immigrants for five years; New Article 1 of the constitution: Christian/Jewish/Humanitarian culture must stay dominant in the Netherlands; Moratorium of five years for building new mosques and Islamic schools; Closure of radical mosques and deportation of radical imams.*<sup>72</sup>

In these quotations, a similarity between the LPF and PVV is found. On the issue of Islam and immigration, the PVV builds on the LPF’s policy proposals. The PVV, much like the LPF, draws a strong contrast between ‘them,’ the threat posing Muslim immigrants, and ‘us,’ the liberal Dutch who are in need of protection from ‘them.’ This is further exemplified by the emphasis on the Judeo-Christian and Humanitarian identity, which is an example of Key 1(a).

In 2010, the PVV received 15.5 percent of the vote which provided them with twenty-four seats in the House of Representatives. This is a 38% increase in seats compared to their inaugural 2006 election and illustrates the PVV’s rapid growth in popularity.

In the time leading up to the 2010 election, Geert Wilders and his PVV party actively began using pro-gay rhetoric. At the time, pro-gay rhetoric was mainly used by mainstream parties on the left but distinctly not in the rhetorical canon of populist parties in Europe, making the PVV stand

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<sup>71</sup> DNPP, Archive PVV, ‘Verkiezingspamflet’, 2006, 1, <http://irs.ub.rug.nl/dbi/4c750f6f78d2c>

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 3-4.

out in using this rhetorical political strategy.<sup>73</sup> It can be speculated that the PVV's implementation of PGAIR helped them in securing their seats that year.

What can be seen in the way that the PVV and party leader Wilders, especially, used pro-gay rhetoric, is to make pro-gay sentiment a Dutch value, and that Dutch voters seemed to agree. The PVV contrasts this value to immigrant's alleged intolerance and discrimination towards LGBTQ people. The support for gay rights was made explicitly visible in the party program used for the 2010 elections. In the program we find multiple references to Dutch culture's incompatibility with immigrant, mostly Muslim, cultures:

*The PVV supports the rights of women and homosexuals. The PVV defends the traditional Judeo-Christian and humanist values that have made the Netherlands successful.*<sup>74</sup>

*Mass-Immigration has drastic consequences for all facets of our society. Economically it is a disaster, it affects the quality of our education, increases the unsafety on the streets, leads to an exodus from our cities, it drives out Jews and homosexuals, and flushes years of women's emancipation down the toilet.*<sup>75</sup>

and

*Now is also the time to choose for the protection of essential parts of our culture: the freedom of homosexuals and the equality of men and women.*<sup>76</sup>

and

*The choice that lays ahead of us on June 9 is an easy one: to continue going down the multicultural abyss of restructuring our traditional norms and values. Choosing for safety or choosing for more criminality. Choosing for Islam or choosing for the Netherlands.*<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Akkerman, 'Immigration Policy'. Research from, Akkerman shows that within Europe the majority of populist parties do not support gay rights, and have a traditional conservative position on this issue.

<sup>74</sup> DNPP, Archive PVV, 'De Agenda van Hoop en Optimisme', 2010, 5, <http://irs.ub.rug.nl/dbi/4c333c0b343fc>

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 6

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 6

These statements are key to the PGAIR and clearly, demonstrate the emphasis on Dutch culture and position of gays and women therein (Key 2 and 3). It also points out that Dutch culture is in need of protection from immigrants (Key 4). Additionally, it exposes a belief of incompatibility between Dutch values and other cultural values where one needs to choose between adhering to Dutch values or Islamic values (Key 4), intersections that may exist between those are non-existent.

Gay is narrowly defined in the 2010 PVV party program. Besides ‘gay,’ no other non-heterosexuals identities are mentioned (i.e. bisexual, trans, lesbian). There is also no mention of *immigrants* who may identify as gay.

PGAIR is not only found within the PVV’s 2006 and 2010 documentation around said elections. The party has continuously been using this rhetoric to define their position in Dutch politics and convince voters of their standpoints. One can find PGAI statements in the 2012 program:

*We protect our homosexuals against the rising Islam.*<sup>78</sup>

and:

*...we see an over-representation of non-western immigrants on the matter of welfare dependence, anti-semitism, hate against gays, discrimination towards women, crime, nuisance, school drop-out, and honor-killings.*<sup>79</sup>

Both quotes are an example of Key 5(c) and 6(c), implying that within Dutch society gays are protected whereas in Islam gays are discriminated against.

Additionally, the PVV was absent from the 2010 ‘Pink Party Leader Debate’, where all other main parties were present.<sup>80</sup> ‘The Pink Party Leader Debate’ is an initiative that was started in 2010 by the COC, the main LGBTQ lobby group in the Netherlands, and is an important opportunity for party leaders to set out their ideas and policy plans regarding the position of LGBTQ people in

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<sup>78</sup> DNPP, Archive PVV, Hún Brussel, óns Nederland’, 2012, 35, <http://irs.ub.rug.nl/dbi/4ff53db3f079c>.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid. 45.

<sup>80</sup> ‘Roze lijsttrekkersdebat Tweede Kamerverkiezingen 2010’, *Rainbowvote.nu*, 29-05-2010, [www.rainbowvote.nl](http://www.rainbowvote.nl), (29-05-2019).

Dutch society. The PVV's absence from this exposes their lack of overall policy proposals that refer to improving LGBTQ emancipation, revealing that their rhetoric was what is understood as propagandic rather than legitimate.<sup>81</sup>

## 1.5 Trots of Nederland's Pro-Gay Anti-Immigration Rhetoric

The PVV has not been the only populist party in the Netherlands to employ PGAIR. In 2008, the party Trots op Nederland (Proud of the Netherlands, TON) under the leadership of Rita Verdonk was established. Verdonk had previously been a member of the VVD where she served as the Minister of Migration and Integration. Verdonk started her own party after being removed from the VVD after she criticized the VVD for not taking a firm enough stance in the national debate on migration<sup>82</sup> She started her own party to take a more right-wing position, and as such followed in the footsteps of both Wilders and Fortuyn. TON participated in their first election cycle in 2010 but did not receive enough votes to secure any seats in the House of Representatives. Despite their loss, Verdonk's previous position as minister and the representation of TON in local municipal elections, Verdonk's statements were still widely published and documented. From an interview with Verdonk from the website Gay.nl, the following statements stand out:

*Our [native Dutch] norms and values, the freedom of speech, the equal treatment of men and women, of gay and straight people, those things are being threatened. We allow being walked over in the Netherlands. I say: every Burqa is one too many.*<sup>83</sup>

And:

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<sup>81</sup> Even as the party continued to use PGAIR in their party programs they continued their propagandic rather than legitimate leveraging of pro-gay speech. In 2012, the PVV did not respond to the election initiative of the website Gayvote.nl, where parties reacted to a number of statements regarding the position of LGBTQ people in the upcoming governing term. In 2017, the PVV abstained from signing the rainbow-agreement, an agreement initiated by the COC where eight promises are drafted to improve the emancipation of LGBTQ people in the coming governing period. By abstaining from signing the agreement, the PVV exposes their lack of commitment to improving the position of LGBTQ people.

<sup>82</sup> Parlementair Documentatie Centrum, 'Afsplitsing Rita Verdonk (2007)', [https://www.parlement.com/id/vkdh8w1v9a0/afsplitsing\\_rita\\_verdonk\\_2007](https://www.parlement.com/id/vkdh8w1v9a0/afsplitsing_rita_verdonk_2007) (30-05-2019).

<sup>83</sup> Rita Verdonk: over 5 jaar hier allemaal met hoofddoekje' *HP de Tijd*, 27-10-2009.

<https://www.hpdetijd.nl/2009-10-27/rita-verdonk-over-5-jaar-hier-allemaal-met-hoofddoekje/> (15-05-2019)

*Well, we have Moroccan bad boys in the Netherlands. A group that has caused you [Gay.nl] enough problems as well and every policeman knows who they are. There are, by approximation of the Cabinet, around 25,000 of them, and is it not possible to arrest them and send them to an educational institution?*<sup>84</sup>

Verdonk, much like the LPF and PVV also clearly uses an ‘us’ versus ‘them’ narrative and mentions women and gays in her call for protection of the Dutch culture (Keys 1, 2, 3). The intersections of identifying as LGBTQ, Muslim, and/or immigrant are ignored. In 2006, Verdonk was criticized for wanting to deport Iranian LGBTQ people back to Iran while a report from Human Rights Watch gave a strong indication of their lack of safety in the country.<sup>85</sup> In the TON party program of 2010, there is no reference to LGBTQ people or concrete policy proposals. This absence of clear policies exposes the lack of commitment to improving the rights and emancipation of LGBTQ people in the Netherlands. This clearly demonstrates how LGBTQ rights are used to promote TON’s anti-immigration agenda.

#### **FROM HOMONATIONALISM TO PRO-GAY ANTI-IMMIGRANT RHETORIC**

This chapter traced the rise of PGAIR from 1997 to 2017 and has shown that PGAIR started as a form of identity politics employed by Pim Fortuyn and grew to become a rhetorical tool used by all populist parties in the Netherlands. Key moments are the establishment of LPF in 2002, the establishment of PVV in 2006 and the transformation of the PVV from a party on the fringe to a serious competitor to the mainstream in 2010. Essential to all these key moments is the use of PGAIR to define the position of the populist parties.

By looking at the different Keys that contribute to the ‘us’ versus ‘them’ dichotomy, the incompatibility between the two that PGAIR presumes to be true becomes visible. Examples found in sources as wide-ranging as Pim Fortuyn’s book; interviews and statement of Fortuyn, Wilders, Verdonk; and the party programs of LPF and PVV reveal the formation and composition of Dutch political PGAIR.

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<sup>84</sup>Verdonk: ‘homo’s en hetero’s gelijk!’, *Wing*, 06-06-2010  
<https://winq.nl/articles/18365/verdonk-homos-en-heteros-gelijk/> (15-05-2019)

<sup>85</sup>Verdonk stuurt Iraanse homo’s weer terug’ COC, 28-02-2006,  
[https://www.coc.nl/internationaal/verdonk-stuurt-iraanse-homos-weer-terug\(15-05-2019\)](https://www.coc.nl/internationaal/verdonk-stuurt-iraanse-homos-weer-terug(15-05-2019)).

PGAIR is defined by a strict divide that overlooks important intersections of sexual identity, religion, and migration background. This rigidity creates a system in which the reality that someone may identify as both an immigrant, Muslim, and/or LGBTQ is ignored, if not completely overlooked. Within the PGAIR, religion is often substituted for Islam, ignoring the reality that other religions, including Christian denominations, also may condemn homosexuality. PGAIR also ignores the impact of social constructs, such as heteronormativity, which itself hinders the emancipation of LGBTQ people in society. Additionally, PGAIR contributes to xenophobia, Islamophobia, and homophobia. The following chapters examine instances of the PGAIR in the political programs and statements of political leaders of mainstream parties VVD, CDA, and PvdA.

## CHAPTER TWO: PGAIR and the VVD

### 2.0 PGAIR Within the VVD

This chapter examines how the VVD has used PGAI in the last two decades. First, the chapter provides a background on the party and its leadership since 2002. Second, it analyzes instances of party speech in election years between 2001 and 2017, for occurrences of PGAIR; the analysis is split into the governing periods of each election (sections 2.2 - 2.5). The sources include party programs from each election period and speeches, interviews, and contributions to political debates by party representatives.

### 2.1 An Introduction to the VVD

The Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie, VVD (People's Party for Freedom and Democracy), established in 1948, is a right-wing liberal party with progressive standpoints. It has roots in the Liberale Staatspartij (Liberal State Party), established in 1921.<sup>86</sup> The VVD envisions a society where people have as much freedom as possible, without harming the rights of others. The platform states five core values: freedom, responsibility, tolerance, social justice, and equivalence.<sup>87</sup> They are known for supporting international trade, lowering taxes, and reducing funding to public institutions such as universities and cultural initiatives.

From looking at the election results (Table 1), it is clear that the VVD, apart from 2006, has been part of the coalition and hence was part of the governing alliance. In 2002, the party lost 14 seats compared to the elections in 1998. According to VVD members, these votes are likely to have gone to LPF.<sup>88</sup> New elections were held in January 2003. The party won back some votes. Since the 2006 elections, the VVD has been led by Mark Rutte. In 2006, the party lost votes compared to the previous years and did not become part of the coalition. From 2010 to 2019, the VVD received the

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<sup>86</sup> Parlementair Documentatie Centrum, 'Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie' [https://www.parlement.com/id/vh8lnhrouwxy/volkspartij\\_voor\\_vrijheid\\_en\\_democratie](https://www.parlement.com/id/vh8lnhrouwxy/volkspartij_voor_vrijheid_en_democratie) (15-05-2019)

<sup>87</sup> VVD, 'Onze Liberale Waarden', <https://www.vvd.nl/kernwaarden/> (15-05-2019)

<sup>88</sup> Aart Brouwer, 'Het moet nu echt afgelopen zijn', *De Groene Amsterdammer*, 12-10-2001, <https://www.groene.nl/artikel/het-moet-nu-echt-afgelopen-zijn> (15-05-2019).

most votes in the election and has been the governing party and consequently, Rutte has been prime minister.

<b>VVD Election Results<sup>89</sup> (Table 1)</b>			
<b>Year</b>	<b>Seats</b>	<b>Vote %</b>	<b>Coalition or opposition?</b>
2017	33	21.3	Coalition - Cabinet Rutte III
2012	41	26.8	Coalition - Cabinet Rutte II
2010	31	20.5	Coalition - Cabinet Rutte I
2006	22	14.7	Opposition - Cabinet Balkenende IV
2003	28	17.9	Coalition - Cabinet Balkenende II
2002	24	15.4	Coalition - Cabinet Balkenende I
1998	38	24.6	Coalition - Cabinet Kok II

## **2.2 Election Period 2000-2002**

In 2002, elections for the House of Representatives took place. In that year's party program, about half-a-page of the total 45 pages is dedicated to the integration of immigrants in the Netherlands. Suggesting that migration was not as important a topic at the time for the VVD as for the LPF. What is found on the topic of migration is fairly liberal and emphasize the freedom of the individual:

*The integration policy of the government should reason from the uniqueness of each individual. Not the group one belongs to, but rather the personal circumstances should be the point of departure....stereotyping as a result of group-thinking will be ended and the individual will become centralized. The government has a task to eliminate existing prejudice and counter discrimination.<sup>90</sup>*

<sup>89</sup>Parliamentair Documentatie Centrum, 'VVD en de tweede kamerverkiezingen', [https://www.parlement.com/id/vhsbcqv0h2yz/vvd\\_en\\_de\\_tweede\\_kamerverkiezingen\\_sinds](https://www.parlement.com/id/vhsbcqv0h2yz/vvd_en_de_tweede_kamerverkiezingen_sinds) (15-05-2019).

<sup>90</sup>DNPP, Archive VVD, 'Beginselverklaring', 15-11-2008, <http://dnpprepo.ub.rug.nl/id/eprint/9992>



A strong dismissal of stereotyping and prejudice are visible in this quote, distinctly different from LPF's party program from the same year. Whereas the LPF makes strong and general statements on Islam and Muslims, the VVD seems to avoid these generalizations. Instead, the VVD proposes Dutch language lessons, which would allow them to additionally understand Dutch culture. There is no attention to the emancipation of LGBTQ people. Which is to say, while veiled anti-immigrant sentiments are found in the VVD's 2002 party program, true examples of PGAIR are not. Instances of PGAIR can be found in statements made to the media by VVD party members, however.

In 2001, controversy broke out over statements made by Rotterdam Imam, Khalil El Moumni. In a TV interview, he proclaimed that homosexuality is a disease which should be stopped from spreading.<sup>91</sup> In response, House of Representatives and VVD member Jan Rijkstra, discussed the possibility of deporting El Moumni and suggested educational services for imams to learn about Dutch norms and values.<sup>92</sup> That said, Rijkstra drew, to a certain extent, a conclusion of incompatibility between Imam El Moumni's statements and his party's conception of Dutch norms and values, while remaining vague about if this conclusion of incompatibility referred to the Imam's comments only or to the Muslim community as a whole. While the VVD's reaction to Imam Mounmni's statements was quite divisive, they did not go as far as to attach their dislike of the statement to any policy proposals, including those that might limit immigration to the Netherlands. Their reaction can be seen as a reactive though not an explicit instrument to argue for more restrictive immigration policies.

### **2.3 Election Period 2003-2006**

January 2003 elections prompted the VVD to compose a new party program of which half-a-page of the five total pages called for no discrimination, less immigration from non-western countries, and more integration. While no specific reason is cited for lessening immigration non-western countries,

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<sup>91</sup> NOVA, 'Het interview met imam El-Moumni' 23-01-2003, <http://archieff.ntr.nl/nova/page/detail/nieuws/39/Het%20interview%20met%20imam%20El-Moumni.html> (20-05-2019).

<sup>92</sup> 'Reactie van liberalen op imam getuigt van zelfgenoegzaamheid' *De Volkskrant*, 18-05-2002, <https://www.volkskrant.nl/nieuws-achtergrond/reactie-van-liberalen-op-imam-getuigt-van-zelfgenoegzaamheid~bf410e6b/>

it can be assumed that the logic ties to protecting ‘Dutch’ values (including the prohibition of discrimination on the basis of sexual preference), which are also mentioned in the same paragraph:

*The Dutch norms and values, as stated in the constitution, are worthy of protection. We are proud of our freedom of expression, the prohibition of discrimination on the grounds of race or sexual preference, and the equality between men and women, as part of our society.*<sup>93</sup>

While there is no explicit mention in the program that the stated values are threatened by immigrants, it is implied, and therefore an example of Key 1c.

In the 2003 party program, a policy is proposed to oversee the adoption of ‘Dutch’ values by immigrants through inspecting religious education in the Netherlands. Context cues, namely being necessary for the adoption of ‘Dutch’ values, suggests the proposal is referring to non-‘Dutch’ religious education, which is best understood as Islamic education. In the 2003 party program no proposals for safeguarding LGBTQ rights or countering discrimination against LGBTQ are found. Revealing the VVD’s confirmation bias: there are no problems of discrimination towards LGBTQ people.

The VVD caught the attention of the media in 2004 when they called for the closing of a the Al-Tawheed Mosque in Amsterdam after the mosque was said to be selling books calling for the murder of LGBTQ people and female genital mutilation and for the role they were presumed to have played in the radicalization process of Mohammed B. who murdered Theo van Gogh. Gerrit Zalm, the party leader at the time, stated that the Netherlands was ‘at war’ with extremist Islam, a statement which he later modified to ‘in conflict’ rather than ‘at war’.<sup>94</sup> While the VVD did not propose any immigration related proposals in direct response to this occurrence, they did draw an incompatibility between ‘Dutch’ values and Islamic values.

In 2004, the Reformed Church Association (Gereformeerde Kerk Nederland) held an assembly where they, just like the Al-Tawheed Mosque, condemned homosexual relations.<sup>95</sup> There

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<sup>93</sup> DNPP, Archive VVD, ‘De VVD maakt werk van Nederland’, 2003, 5, <http://irs.ub.rug.nl/dbi/4c3ebde783e2d>

<sup>94</sup> Balkenende nuanceert oorlogstaal van Zalm’ *De Volkskrant*, 09-11-2004, <https://www.volkskrant.nl/nieuws-achtergrond/balkenende-nuanceert-oorlogstaal-van-zalm~b47738f4/>

<sup>95</sup> CGK, ‘Persverklaring Synodebespreking homoseksualiteit. 14-02-2017, <https://cgk.nl/persverklaring-synodebespreking-homoseksualiteit/> (16-05-2019).

was, however, no public political condemnation or outcry over these statements as incompatible with ‘Dutch’ values. This shows how the VVD negatively singles out Muslims in their supposed incompatibility with ‘Dutch’ culture. This double standard of incompatibility is an example of PGAIR Key 4 .

## **2.4 Election Period 2006-2010**

The VVD’s 2006 election program, only four pages long, does not include any reference to tightening control of Mosques, a sentiment that could have been expected based on their reaction to the Al-Tawheed Mosque scandal in 2004. The program instead mentions an end to discrimination, specifically towards headscarf-wearing women and gays, and yet, makes no policy proposals on how to overcome the discrimination.<sup>96</sup> In 2010, *www.gayvote.nl* published an analysis of how parties voted on topics concerning the LGBTQ community. On the proposed motion, initiated by PVV, that states ‘allochthonous’ perpetrators of violence against gays should be deported from the Netherlands, the VVD voted against. Here, they dismiss the PGAIR used by the PVV rather than employ it themselves.

## **2.5 Election period 2010-2012**

The VVD won the elections in 2010. In that year’s 42-page program, there are direct references to LGBTQ rights. Under the section on integration, is a subsection dedicated to religion, which focuses primarily on Islam. A stark reveal that the party’s explicit attention is only required for religions from *outside* of the Netherlands. The umbrella section on integration also suggests that when ‘Dutch’ values are not respected, repeal of one’s residence permit can follow:

*The VVD stands for the rights of women and homosexuals under suppression. Culturally motivated violence such as genital mutilation, honor killings, kidnapping or deserting will be traced and severely punished - it may lead to a repeal of the perpetrator’s residence permit.<sup>97</sup>*

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<sup>96</sup> DNPP, Archive VVD, ‘Voor een samenleving met ambitie’, (2006), 1, <http://irs.ub.rug.nl/dbi/4c3ebe8fa6677>

<sup>97</sup> DNPP, Archive VVD, ‘Orde op zaken’, 2010, 33, <http://irs.ub.rug.nl/dbi/4c31eb0408738>.

Associating threatening women's and gay rights to the residence status of the perpetrator, illustrates the PGAI Keys 5 and 6. The quote also seems at odds with the party's values of individual freedom and dedication to individual motivations instead of stereotyping.<sup>98</sup> Furthermore, this quote is from the program's subsection on religion, furthering the idea that this threat to women and gays is posed by Muslims immigrants.

The party includes a few policy proposals in their 2010 program regarding LGBTQ issues, including higher punishments for violence against gays. The program exposes a dichotomy between 'us' (secular and conforming to 'Dutch' values) and 'them' (religious immigrants with a violent culture threatening the Dutch freedom). Sufficient instance of PGAIR Keys are found in the 2010-2012 election cycle to confidently declare that it was during this time that PGAIR was structurally integrated into the VVD's rhetorical strategy.

## **2.6 Election period 2012-2017**

In this election cycle, there is again a section on religion within a broader section on integration. The section largely copies the statements from the 2010 elections, but adds an extra reference to integration and religion:

*Religious Institutions that hinder integration, do not fit in the Dutch society and need to be closed.*<sup>99</sup>

This statement implies that the religious institutions to which they are referring are Islamic, for the statement present religion as something that can hinder integration and does not comply with 'Dutch' values, an example of PGAIR Key 4.

It seems paradoxical that conservative forms of Christianity practiced in the Netherlands, are left out completely. For, if 'Dutch' values on which a 'Dutch society' relies are those of freedom and liberalism, Dutch Christian faiths, known to oppose LGBTQ rights, would qualify as a religious institution in need of closure. However, these forms of Christianity do not fit under the section of

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<sup>98</sup> DNPP, Archive VVD, 'Om de vrijheid: liberaal manifest', 09-2005, 16, <http://irs.ub.rug.nl/dbi/4c3f07d392685>

<sup>99</sup> DNPP, Archive VVD, 'Niet doorschuiven maar aanpakken', 2012, 50, <http://dnpprepo.ub.rug.nl/id/eprint/543>.

integration—as ‘native Dutch’ practice this religion—and as such, are not being implied in the above statement. Which is not surprising, for by this point, the VVD is officially employing PGAIR, and condemning Christian denominations is not useful in promoting an anti-immigration agenda. It is therefore clear that the VVD does not mean *all* religious institutions that oppose ‘Dutch’ values, but solely those of (Muslim) immigrants. Suggesting closing religious institutions in order to protect a ‘Dutch society’ can therefore only be seen as instrumental in limiting the freedom of immigrants. A close reading of the program thus exposes another election cycle employing PGAIR.

Outside the party program, the VVD can be seen using PGAIR. An article written in 2016 and posted to the party’s website by Tamara van Ark, the VVD’s vice-president, calls for the safety of women and LGBTQ people. Van Ark states that all people in the Netherlands should be able to move around freely.<sup>100</sup> A reference is made to violence against LGBTQ people in asylum-seeker centers:

*The world is upside down if gay people need to find shelter in a safe house because they are being harassed in an asylum center by people who are jeopardizing in our country acquired freedoms.<sup>101</sup>*

At first sight, it appears as if this quote exposes an intersectional approach to LGBTQ rights; there is a recognition that there are LGBTQ people who are also immigrants. However, the idea that immigrants form a threat against LGBTQ people’s safety is also restated. As such it seems as if immigrants will jeopardize the Dutch liberal values that the ‘native’ Dutch acquired, an example of PGAIR Key 5. And a continuation of the VVD’s portrayal of themselves as a liberal, anti-discrimination party, but fails to follow up on their idea of evaluating an individual rather than a group’s actions.

On September 5th, 2016 Minister Edith Schippers of the VVD was invited to hold the annual De Elsevier/HJ Schoo speech<sup>102</sup>. Here, she refers to a statement made by former, right-wing, politician Bolkestein:

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<sup>100</sup> Tamara van Ark, ‘Iedereen moet veilig over straat kunnen’, 04-11-2016, <https://cms.vvd.nl/nieuws/iedereen-moet-veilig-over-straat-kunnen/>

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

<sup>102</sup> De Elsevier/HJ Schoo speech is an annual speech introduced by the Dutch weekly Elsevier at the beginning of each political year (around the first Tuesday of September).

*All cultures are not equal. And I will say it after him [Bolkestein]: ours is a lot better than all the others that I know. At least for women. At least for the gay or the transsexual.*<sup>103</sup>

Herein PGAIR Keys 1, 2, and 3 are found: the assumed protection that the ‘Dutch’ culture grants LGBTQ people and the lack of this protection from immigrant cultures.

Right before the 2017 elections, VVD member and Prime-Minister, Mark Rutte, wrote an open letter where he drew a correlation between immigrants and the jeopardization of the Dutch value of freedom:

*We feel a growing discomfort when people misuse our freedom to wreck our society, while they came here for that same freedom. People who do not wish to adjust, look down on our habits, and dismiss our values. They who harass gay people, catcall women in short skirts, or call normal Dutch people racist.*<sup>104</sup>

Rutte draws a clear distinction between ‘we,’ which he calls “normal Dutch people”—which he uses on multiple occasions throughout the letter—and ‘them,’ immigrants who do not adhere to ‘Dutch’ values. Included in Rutte’s conception of ‘Dutch’ values is the acceptance of LGBTQ people, an example of PGAIR Keys 5 and 6.

While the VVD dismisses discrimination of LGBTQ people, the VVD does not propose policies to improve their emancipation or safety in either their party program or in the media. Their policy proposal is thus only used to promote a restriction to the overall admission of immigrants to the Netherlands, clearly indicating the use of PGAIR.

## **2.7 Summary**

Before the participation of Pim Fortuyn in the 2002 elections, the VVD paid little attention to immigration and LGBTQ issues. After 2003, the VVD started including LGBTQ issues in their

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<sup>103</sup>Rijksoverheid, ‘De paradox van de vrijheid’, 05-09-2016, <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/toespraken/2016/09/05/de-paradox-van-de-vrijheid> (16-05-2019).

<sup>104</sup>VVD, ‘Lees hier de brief van Mark’, 22-01-2017, <https://www.vvd.nl/nieuws/lees-hier-de-brief-van-mark/> (16-05-2019).

program and increased their focus on immigration issues. As early as 2003, the VVD used PGAIR Keys to create an 'us' versus 'them' divide, but refrained from mentioning gays specifically. After Geert Wilders established the PVV in 2006, the VVD became more explicit in their use of PGAIR. Especially after 2010, when the PVV won 23 seats in the House of Representatives and became a serious competitor of the VVD. Since 2010, the VVD framed gay rights as a Dutch accomplishment and value linked to the Judeo-Christian and Humanistic tradition their party programs. In recent years, the PGAIR has become more explicitly used, by Schippers and Rutte in particular, and distinctly similar to Geert Wilders.

## **CHAPTER THREE: PGAIR and the CDA**

### **3.0 PGAIR Within the CDA**

This chapter will analyze how the CDA has used PGAIR in the last two decades. The chapter will first provide background on the party and its leaders of the governing periods since 2002. Second, it will analyze party documents and media sources per national election period, 2002, 2003, 2006, 2010, and 2012 to 2017, to determine where and how PGAIR can be found. The analysis is split into the governing periods of each election.

### **3.1 An introduction to CDA**

CDA stands for Christian Democratic Appeal (Christen-Democratisch Appèl) and was established in October 1980 through a fusion of three existing Christian parties. After the secularization of the 1960s and 1970s, the Christian parties began to lose votes and hence decided to merge into one party.<sup>105</sup> CDA is not bound to a particular Christian denomination and knows both Catholic and Protestant members and leaders. CDA approaches politics from Christian-democratic standpoint where social and economic positions are rooted in Christian values. The party accepts the Biblical testimony of God's promises, deeds, and commandments as the decisive factors for man, society, and the government.<sup>106</sup> Its core values include solidarity, stewardship, and care for one's neighbors. Within the political spectrum, CDA occupies a centrist position between Liberals and Conservatives on the one hand and Social Democrats on the other. Below is an overview of the party's seats in the House of Representatives over the last two decades:

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<sup>105</sup> Parlementair Documentatie Centrum, 'Christen-Democratisch Appèl', [https://www.parlement.com/id/vh8lnhrouwxm/christen\\_democratisch\\_appel\\_cda](https://www.parlement.com/id/vh8lnhrouwxm/christen_democratisch_appel_cda) (16-05-2019).

<sup>106</sup> Ibid.



CDA Election results <sup>107</sup> (table 2)			
Year	Seats	Vote percentage	Coalition or opposition?
2017	19	12,4	Coalition - Cabinet Rutte III
2012	13	8,5	Opposition - Cabinet Rutte II
2010	21	13,6	Coalition - Cabinet Rutte I
2006	41	26,5	Coalition - Cabinet Balkenende IV
2003	44	28,6	Coalition - Cabinet Balkenende II
2002	43	27,9	Coalition - Cabinet Balkenende I
1998	29	18,3	Opposition - Cabinet Kok II

Between 2002 and 2010, CDA was the biggest party led by Jan Peter Balkenende, who was prime minister during these eight years. Since 2002, CDA has been in the opposition once, in 2012, but returned to become part the coalition in 2017. The party lost a lot of votes after 2006, with an ultimate low of 13 seats in 2012. After the governing period of Balkenende, the party has been led by Sybrand van Haersma-Buma (Buma hereafter) since 2012.

### 3.2 Election period 2000-2002

The period between 2000 and 2002 was a defining moment for CDA with regard to LGBTQ rights. On 19 December 2000, CDA voted against the legalization of same-sex marriage.<sup>108</sup> In this vote, all parties, except the Christian parties, voted for the legalization. Parties in favor were a majority and hence, same-sex marriage became fully legalized on April 1, 2001. Equal marriage has been a right that LGBTQ groups in the Netherlands lobbied for since the 1970s. Even though equal marriage is not a guarantee for full equality, it can be seen as an accomplishment of LGBTQ emancipation in

<sup>107</sup> Parlementair Documentatie Centrum, 'Christen-Democratisch Appèl', [https://www.parlement.com/id/vh8lnhrouwxi/christen\\_democratisch\\_appel\\_cda](https://www.parlement.com/id/vh8lnhrouwxi/christen_democratisch_appel_cda) (16-05-2019).

<sup>108</sup> Eerste Kamer der Staten Generaal, 'Stemming aangenomen tegen CDA', 19-12-2000, [https://www.eerstekamer.nl/behandeling/20001219/stemming\\_aangenomen\\_tegen\\_cda\\_rpf/document3/f=/w26672h3.pdf](https://www.eerstekamer.nl/behandeling/20001219/stemming_aangenomen_tegen_cda_rpf/document3/f=/w26672h3.pdf).

the context of the early 2000s. The statement that CDA made by voting against an equal marriage law can, therefore, not be read as pro-gay. It will, therefore, be unlikely to find PGAIR within the CDA in this period.

In the party program, we find no strong statements with regard to Dutch values and no reference to these values being under threat of immigrants. The CDA proposes an integrated European policy on asylum and closed immigration policy for economic migrants. On the topic of integration, the CDA emphasizes the need for immigrants to learn Dutch in order to participate on an equal level. They assign an important role to religious organizations to discuss norms and values, eliminate the backlog and assist the integration into Dutch society. In the 2002 party program, the center position of the CDA with regard to immigration and integration becomes clear. They are against economic migrants but are open to refugees and promote integration where immigrants can find a place within their own religious organizations. The program pays no attention to LGBTQ issues; LGBTQ people or the law on same-sex marriage is also not mentioned in the program. Hence, PGAIR cannot be found in this election's party program.

Whereas the party program presents a center position on immigration and integration, a speech held by Balkenende in January 2002 presents an anti-immigrant position. In the speech, held at a meeting of the CDA and also published in the newspaper NRC, Balkenende made statements regarding the superiority of the Dutch culture and importance of its perseverance in a multicultural society. According to Balkenende, Dutch society cannot properly function without immigrants adhering to Dutch norms and values. He simultaneously criticizes the governing period under prime minister Kok between 1994 and 1998 which supported multiculturalism. Balkenende states:

*Dutch society will benefit from its own culture and values being taken seriously by maintaining behavioral norms, based on a shared of responsibility towards each other, the government and society... This will show the newcomers in our society with what rules they ended up.*<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>109</sup>Jan Peter Balkenende, 'Samenleving mag geen optelsom zijn' 25-01-2002, <https://www.nrc.nl/nieuws/2002/01/25/samenleving-mag-geen-optelsom-van-culturen-zijn-7574667-a191569> (16-05-2019).

Here, Balkenende draws a distinction between Dutch people who have shared similar values, habits, and behavior for a long time, and immigrants who have different values, and need to assimilate themselves to the Dutch culture, which holds a certain standard. This standard is described by Balkenende as the separation between church and state, a constitution, and democracy. Even though this statement does not include a reference to LGBTQ people, it does set a tone of incompatibility between Dutch culture and immigrant culture and could be seen as an example of Key 1 (a, b),

### **3.3 Election period 2003 and 2006**

For the 2003 elections, the CDA used the same party program as 2002, as such, the standpoints on immigration and integration and the lack of standpoints on LGBTQ matters, remain unchanged. Interesting here is the seeming discrepancy between Balkenende's speech which accentuates Dutch culture and its norms and values, and the party program which remains neutral on the topic of integration and grants space for religious organizations, such as Mosques, to take a role in the integration process of migrants. In the party program, the CDA continues to embrace a pluralist approach to diversity and integration, but outside the party program, the CDA representatives often take a more right-wing stance.

### **3.4 Election period 2006 and 2010**

The 2006 party program starts off with the key challenges of the Netherlands according to the CDA. Integration, immigration or LGBTQ emancipation are not mentioned among these challenges. Immigration and Integration are discussed in a different section of the program but LGBTQ matters are not included. In the section on immigration and integration, there is an emphasis on the shared values that are fundamental to Dutch society and are thought to be in need of protection from immigrants' culture.<sup>110</sup> In the same section on integration, the role of religion is discussed. The program states:

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<sup>110</sup> DNPP, Archive CDA, 'Vertrouwen in Nederland, vertrouwen in elkaar, 2006, 32, <http://pubnpp.eldoc.ub.rug.nl/FILES/root/verkiezingsprogramma/TK/cda2006/vp06.pdf>.

*Religion should never be a legitimization for behavior that goes against the core values of our society.*<sup>111</sup>

The program seems to refer to religion in general but in the same paragraph, it proposes a policy that obligates all imams to be educated in the Dutch norms and values. This exposes the assumption that Muslims are in more need of adjusting to the Dutch norms and values than other religious groups. This also exposes that, if imams are uneducated, their values would be incompatible with that of the Dutch culture. This incompatibility is an example of Key 4(a). The CDA does not propose a full stop on immigration of Muslims but does seem to raise caution towards this group. Here, PGAIR is not explicitly found —there is no reference to pro-gay rights— but it does fit into the discourse of incompatible cultures.

### **3.5 Election period 2010 and 2012**

In the 2010 party program, we find the first reference of the CDA to LGBTQ people. The reference is found in the section discussing the integration of immigrants in the Netherlands. The program states:

*Violence resulting from a cultural or religious background, such honor-related violence, female circumcision, or violence against gays or lesbians needs to be tackled...Extremism needs to be tackled with force.*<sup>112</sup>

The statement is already quite explicit in its reference to the assumed cultural or religious background of the perpetrator because it assumes the violence as a result of one's cultural, —non-Dutch— background. As such it exposes Key 5(c) and 6(a, c). Additionally, the underlying reference becomes even more evident through the preceding paragraph where the program states:

*Who comes to the Netherlands may practice their religion in freedom. Because they arrive in a society where the Christian-Jewish and Humanistic tradition and culture color society. That means that the Western culture and norms and values are leading for society.*<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>112</sup> DNPP, Archive CDA, 'Slagvaardig en samen', 2010, 13, <http://irs.ub.rug.nl/dbi/4c31f8f4f2d9e>

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*,12

Here the Judeo-Christian and Humanistic tradition are said to represent modernity and freedom, including the freedom of women and LGBTQ people. This is an example of Key 1(b). Furthermore, this statement contributes to the assumption that those practices endangering LGBTQ people or women do not emerge out of Western culture but emerge from a non-western culture where such practices occur (Key 5 and 6). However, violence against LGBTQ people knows both native Dutch perpetrators and perpetrators with a migration background. Additionally, some Christians in the Netherlands also condemn homosexuality. It, therefore, seems misleading to portray Western culture and norms and values culture as different than that of immigrants. Rather, the question arises if a general 'Western' or 'Christian-Jewish' culture can be distinguished at all. Finally, the CDA has no concrete policy proposals to improve the rights or emancipation of LGBTQ people: this exposes the propagandic nature of the CDA's arguments.

### **3.6 Election period 2012 and 2017**

The 2012 party program restates all the same proposals and ideas on immigration and integration as the 2010 program. There are no additional proposals to improve the status of LGBTQ people. This leaves the reader to believe that, there are no issues within the LGBTQ community that need improvement, and that the issue of violence against gays and lesbians remains to come forth from one's religious or cultural background. The belief that no improvement for LGBTQ people is needed is supported by the statement made by party leader Buma in 2016. In a statement, he proclaimed that LGBTQ education should not be mandatory in schools.<sup>114</sup> Right before the elections of 2017, CDA also withdrew from signing the rainbow agreement, just like PVV did.<sup>115</sup> This clearly shows the propagandic nature of gay rights adopted by the CDA and hence the use of the PGAIR.

In an essay written by Sybrand Buma and his colleague Pieter Heersma, published on the CDA website, elaborates on the issues of integration and Islam as discussed in the party program.

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<sup>114</sup> COC, 'CDA lijsttrekker Buma tegen verplichte lhbt voorlichting', 16-08-2012, <https://www.coc.nl/jong-school/cda-lijsttrekker-buma-tegen-verplichte-lhbt-voorlichting> (16-05-2019).

<sup>115</sup> JOOP, 'Geen steun van PVV, CDA, DENK lhbt akkoord', 07-03-2017, <https://joop.bnnvara.nl/nieuws/geen-steun-van-pvv-cda-denk-lhbt-akkoord> (16-05-2019).

The essay, titled “Healthy Patriotism” (Gezonde Vaderlandsliefde), published in the spring of 2016, discusses the challenges of the integration in the Netherlands and the threat of terrorism of, specifically, the Islamic State. Buma and Heersma state that only a society that is self-aware can be a resilient society. A self-aware society exists by the grace of a leading culture and healthy patriotism.<sup>116</sup> The leading culture they refer to is the inheritance of the European Jewish-Christian tradition which has shaped Dutch society. This is an example of Key 1(a, b, c) to the PGAIR. Buma and Heersma explain that this inheritance is built from:

*In the first place the absolute equality between people, regardless of their beliefs or background. This fundamental equality is rooted in the awareness that every person is a creature of God, created after his image and that every person is therefore of intrinsic value; the worthiness of a person is not dependent on their sex, skin color, presentations or functions, but solely of the fact that he exists. This equality is unique to the Judeo-Christian culture; the dominant cultures of Asia and the Middle-East know a lot more hierarchy according to their meaning and intention.<sup>117</sup>*

Buma and Heersma thus perceive the Dutch culture as superior over the culture of the Middle East and Asia. The alleged reason for this is the lack of hierarchy that exists in the Netherlands but which is present in the Middle East and Asia. Apart from the existing hierarchies that do exist in the Netherlands, the statement of the superiority of Dutch culture is a hierarchical one by itself, where there is an understanding that Dutch people are ‘better’ than people with different cultural backgrounds because of their belief in everyone’s intrinsic value. This explanation is hence inherently paradoxical. Additionally, there appears to be another hidden proclamation in the explanation provided. Buma and Heersma mention explicitly the cultures of Asia and the Middle East as being incompatible with the Dutch culture. The dominant culture is in many places intertwined with Islam, and hence it appears as if they state that Islam specifically is incompatible with Dutch culture. After all, other regions in the world, i.e. Africa or Latin-America, also have cultures that are rooted in different traditions than the Netherlands, but here Islam often is not the dominant religion, and as

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<sup>116</sup>Sybran Buma and Pieter Heersma, ‘Gezonde Vaderlandsliefde’ *Christen Democractische Verkenning* 29-03-2016, 84, Gezonhttps://d2vry01uvf8h31.cloudfront.net/CDA/Documenten/2016/Gezonde%20vaderlandsliefde%20CDV%20Lente%202016.pdf

<sup>117</sup> Ibid.

such, they remain unmentioned. In Buma's Elsevier HJ Schoo speech, which he held in 2017, he does explicitly mention the arrival of Islam to Europe as a threat to the achieved equality and freedom. Here he also explicitly mentions the acceptance of LGBTQ people as part of the modernity. This places the emancipation of LGBTQ people within the modernity that characterizes the West and is lacking in the East. This is an example of Key 2(a). Overall, Buman and Heersma differentiate between 'us' and 'them'. This dichotomy is based on an assumed free and modern culture of the West and backward culture of the Middle East; this exposes the use of PGAIR.

### **3.7 Summary**

In the early 2000s, the CDA cannot be seen as a party that is pro-gay, they voted against the equal marriage law and do not mention LGBTQ people in their party documents. The PGAIR is hence not found in this period. Within CDA the PGAIR is visible since 2010. The PGAIR within the CDA is especially defined by an assumed incompatibility between 'us' and 'them.' Furthermore, their use of PGAIR is clear through the CDA's reference to the Judeo-Christian and Humanistic tradition that has shaped Dutch society into modern culture. This modernity includes rights for women and gays and lesbian who are, in some places more than others, explicitly mentioned. The assumed accomplishment of modernity is something that is portrayed as in need of preserving and as under threat of immigrant cultures, namely Islamic cultures. Since 2016, under the leadership of Buma, PGAIR has become more explicit. Buma has used the PGAIR in speeches and writing in similar ways as Geert Wilders has, clearly indicating a shift from CDA's center position to the right.

## CHAPTER FOUR: PGAIR and the PvdA

### 4.0 PGAIR within the PvdA

This chapter will analyze how the PvdA has used PGAIR in the last two decades. This chapter will first provide background on the party and its leaders of the governing periods since 2002. Second, it will analyze party documents and media sources per national election period, 2002, 2003, 2006, 2010 and 2012 to 2017, to determine where and how PGAIR can be found. The analysis is split into the governing periods of each election

### 4.1 An introduction to PvdA

The Partij van de Arbeid translates into the labor party. The party was founded in 1946 as a post-war fusion of three older parties. PvdA is a left-wing, progressive, socio-democratic party. In its manifesto, their main aims are described as equal opportunities for all, dispersion of power and wealth, sustainable development as well as international solidarity and a strong and democratic Europe.<sup>118</sup> The PvdA envisions an active role of the government in accomplishing their aims. The party has been in the coalition and opposition intermittently. Table 3 shows an overview of the seats and votes of the PvdA.

<b>PvdA Election Results<sup>119</sup> (table 3)</b>			
Year	Seats	Vote percentage	Coalition or opposition?
2017	9	5,7	Opposition - Cabinet Rutte III
2012	38	24,8	Coalition - Cabinet Rutte II
2010	30	19,6	Opposition - Cabinet Rutte I
2006	33	21,2	Coalition - Cabinet Balkenende IV
2003	42	27,3	Opposition- Cabinet Balkenende II
2002	23	15,1	Opposition - Cabinet Balkenende I
1998	45	28,9	Coalition - Cabinet Kok II

<sup>118</sup> DNNP, Archive PVDA, 'Beginselen Manifest', 29-01-2005, 3, <http://irs.ub.rug.nl/dbi/4c3ef661ab9e5>.

<sup>119</sup> Parlementair Documentatie CentrumPartij van de Arbeid (Pvda), [https://www.parlement.com/id/vh8lnhrouwxn/partij\\_van\\_de\\_arbeid\\_pvda](https://www.parlement.com/id/vh8lnhrouwxn/partij_van_de_arbeid_pvda) (05-06-2019).



The last time the PvdA was the leading party was between 1994 and 2002 under the leadership of Wim Kok. Since then it has both been in the coalition and opposition, mostly receiving the second-highest number of votes, with the exception of 2017 where they lost a total of 28 votes compared to the previous election.

## 4.2 Election period 2000-2002

The PvdA in this analysis represents the mainstream left. The left in the Netherlands has been known for supporting a progressive view on immigration, multiculturalism and LGBTQ issues. The elections of 2002 followed after eight consecutive years under a PvdA led coalition, the 2002 program is, therefore, likely to represent a vision in line with the years before. In the 2002 party program, the ideas and policy proposals are progressive and appear to be more inclusive than those of the other parties studied in this time period. The PvdA is open to admitting labor migrants and mainstreams gender within this policy proposal by considering the opportunities and needs for women within this policy. Furthermore, the PvdA appears to withhold from creating an ‘us’ versus ‘them’ divide by acknowledging the lack of representation in Dutch politics they state:

*Citizens continue to have more trouble recognizing themselves in politics and the government. There are certain groups that feel barely represented in politics. This is mostly because the current politics do not reflect our multicultural society.<sup>120</sup>*

This statement acknowledges the exclusive nature of Dutch politics and problematizes this, while simultaneously calls for a more inclusive political climate. The aim of the party seems to unite rather than divide. This is further supported by the statement that discrimination is part of the reason immigrants may have trouble integrating:

*Many new Dutch are integrated and enrich our society with their labor and their own cultures. However, this development also introduces some issues. The streams of asylum-seekers and economic migrants are becoming*

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<sup>120</sup> DNPP, Archive PvdA, ‘Samen voor de Toekomst’ 2002, 15 <http://irs.ub.rug.nl/dbi/4c728e9f64cc9>

*more difficult to separate. Little knowledge of Dutch language and discrimination obstruct integration and hence decrease the socio-economic opportunities of new citizens.<sup>121</sup>*

Here, it becomes clear that PvdA is cautious towards new immigrants because it is hard to distinguish between who is a deserving refugee and who is not. At the same time, they recognize the contribution immigrants have made to society and the injustice that results from poor integration. Poor integration is perceived as a result of both Dutch' receptiveness and immigrants efforts to learn Dutch. There is no reference to incompatibility of culture or religious tradition, modernity or backwardness. This illustrates the absence of the PGAIR from the party program.

Considering the progressive party program of the PvdA we ought to wonder if their views presented outside the official party documents are in agreement. During the 2001 controversy around Rotterdam Imam El Moumni, the Netherlands was led by prime-minister Kok of the PvdA. As a result of the statements made by El Moumni the PvdA proposed an integration course for imams in the Netherlands. Yet, prime-minister Kok remained devoted to uniting the society rather than dividing it. After the attacks of 9/11, he specifically called for the dangers of generalization of the Muslim community in the Netherlands and visited communities in solidarity. Kok stated that:

*Everybody needs to watch out for generalization. Not all Dutch are guilty when a fanatic throws a rock through the window of an Islamic school, not all Muslims are guilty of 9/11.<sup>122</sup>*

This quotation, not only illustrates can be seen as a strong proclamation against the politics of Pim Fortuyn were Muslims are being lumped together as dangerous and backward. Hence, this cannot be distinguished as a key to the PGAIR.

### **4.3 Election period 2003-2006**

After the elections of 2002, the PvdA suffered a major loss of 23 seats. Some of their old voters may have voted for newcomer LPF, which could trigger a change in standpoints of the PvdA. In the

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<sup>121</sup> Ibid., 11

<sup>122</sup> Marcel ten Hooven, 'De ruïnes van Rood', *De Groene Amsterdammer*, 12-11-2014, <https://www.groene.nl/artikel/de-ruines-van-rood>

introduction to the 2003 party program, an acknowledgment of this loss is stated accompanied by a commitment to reformulate their standpoints. Noteworthy is the positioning of their standpoint on immigration and integration as the first chapter in their party program. The policy proposals are formulated more concrete and take up more space than in 2002. The second standpoint in the section on integration and immigration is a direct reference to LGBTQ people:

*Just like every resident of our country, newcomers must familiarize themselves with the norms fixed in our laws. Included in these are the principles of separation of church and state, the equality of men and women and the equality of homosexuals.*<sup>123</sup>

Even though this statement calls for all residents of the Netherlands to accept the Dutch laws and norms and values regarding LGBTQ and women's emancipation, the placement in the section on immigration and integration exposes the particular addressment of immigrants. If PvdA would truly address their ideal of equality to everyone, they would not have to address immigrants specifically or place it in the section on integration. This also exposes the assumed incompatibility between immigrants and native Dutch residents with regard to LGBTQ acceptance. This is an example of Keys 4(b), 5(a), 6(a).

#### **4.4 Election period 2006-2010**

In the introduction of the 2006 party program, we find a direct reference to the emancipation of LGBTQ people in relation to the progressive accomplishments of Dutch society:

*Our country has been doing better than a century ago, [back] then homosexuals were not allowed to come 'out of the closet,' let alone get married. Back then girls were not supposed to learn because it was unnecessary for women. It seems so long ago, but it has not even been one hundred years!*<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>123</sup> DNPP, Archive PvdA, 'Voor verantwoordelijkheid, respect en solidariteit: verkiezingsmanifest 2003-2007', 2002, 5, <http://irs.ub.rug.nl/dbi/4c73bde6389ac>.

<sup>124</sup> DNPP, Archive PvdA, 'P, 2006, Samen sterker: werken aan een beter Nederland', 3, <http://irs.ub.rug.nl/dbi/4c750b0231d8d>

This statement shows how modern the Netherlands now is as a country because of the emancipation for LGBTQ people and women. However, different from populist rhetoric, the statement is made in a broader introduction without specific references to immigrants and is followed by concrete policy proposals to improve the emancipation of women and LGBTQ people, further into the program. The 2006 party program is the first program, among all different party programs analyzed, that proposes concrete policies to improve the lives of LGBTQ people. This can be seen as a recognition that full equality for, and emancipation of, LGBTQ people is yet to be accomplished. In this regard, the 2006 party program can be read as legitimately Pro-Gay.

The section of the program that discusses immigration and integration at first glance also appears more inclusive than the other party programs of that year. They state:

*Islam is part of our society. Citizens can have a connection to multiple societies, without this standing in the way of their participation in Dutch society.*<sup>125</sup>

However, just before this seemingly liberal statement, Moroccan and Turkish youth are singled out as problematic and unable to find a balance between Western values and Islam.

*We cannot ignore that youth with Turkish and Moroccan parents, who have are born and raised here, reject Western values such as democracy. Today's problems that are related to integration is significant and urgent. Integration is about more than just overcoming socio-economic differences and language problems: it also contains a cultural dimension.*<sup>126</sup>

A close reading reveals that, even though PvdA sees Islam as a part of Dutch society, the religion is still singled out as a threat to Dutch society. Turkish and Moroccan youth are specifically singled out from a larger group of bicultural youth, this leaves one to believe the PvdA perceives Islam, being the main religious background of these youths, as the main signifier that stands in the way of proper participation in Dutch society. The cultural dimension that they refer to can hence be read as Islam. This is an example of Key 4(a, b). The references that PvdA makes are not as obvious as the PVV

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<sup>125</sup> Ibid., 38

<sup>126</sup> Ibid., 38

does, however, they are still present and reveal an assumption of incompatibility between native Dutch and Immigrant cultures. What they overlook is that within Dutch society rejection of these Dutch accomplishments and values are still prevalent, however, these remain unaddressed. This specifically becomes clear in their section devoted to LGBTQ rights.

*Still, in certain population groups, homosexuality is everything but accepted. The position of gays is still not equal to that of heterosexuals. And an increasing number of gays ask themselves whether or not it is safe to walk down the street hand-in-hand.*

Even though this statement, does not refer specifically to immigrant groups, or Muslims, their placement right under the section on immigration and immigration could be read to a reference to immigrants as *certain population groups*. This is however not explicit, and can also be a reference to orthodox Dutch religious groups or overall homophobic Dutch people as well. Hence, it is difficult to really classify the statements of the 2006 program within the PGAIR because their specific policy proposals for LGBTQ people seem legitimately pro-gay.

In the lead up to the 2010 election period, PvdA member Ahmed Marcouch received significant media attention for his attendance at a party to mark the of Ramadan in an Amsterdam based gay bar.<sup>127</sup> Marcouch, during this period, was district chairman of Amsterdam New-West, a neighborhood home to many Muslim residents. Marcouch has initiated a gay memorandum to improve the acceptance of LGBTQ people among the residents in his district. Apart from attending the End of Ramadan celebration, Marcouch proposed to have the Gay Canal Pride parade start from his district and had organized different meetings where Islam and homosexuality were central topics. Marcouch had a clear standpoint of acceptance and compatibility of homosexuality within Islam. This is an intersectional approach where attention is brought to the compatibility between one's sexual and religious identity. Marcouch statements fit within inclusive pro-gay rhetoric were recognition of intersecting identities is addressed. Important to note is that Marcouch during this time, was a representative of Amsterdam, and his influence on the national elections and his place within the PvdA on the national level was thus limited. However, the PvdA leader, of the time,

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<sup>127</sup> 'Marcouch opent suikerfeest in homocafe', *Het Parool*, 29-09-2009, <https://www.parool.nl/nieuws/marcouch-opent-suikerfeest-in-homocafe~b8dbf9bc/>

Wouter Bos, did openly support Marcouch and celebrated his efforts.<sup>128</sup> Marcouch also received national media attention because of his intercultural approach to LGBTQ rights and emancipation. In 2010, Marouch moved to the House of Representatives as a PvdA member. Marcouch's politics show a legitimate pro-gay approach from the PvdA and hence the absence of PGAIR.

#### **4.5 Election period 2010-2012**

The party program of 2010, like the 2006 program, has a strong pro-gay tone. Policy proposals to improve the lives of LGBTQ people are included in the priorities of the party program. Important is that the proposals regarding LGBTQ are in their own section and not related to statements on immigration and integration. Their priority statement on LGBTQ reads:

*Everyone should dare to express their sexual identity. Within the homo-emancipation policy, there is special attention for lesbian and transgender identities. The PvdA wants homosexuality to be open for discussion in religious circles where, traditionally, this has been a sensitive topic.*<sup>129</sup>

Because this statement refers to religion on itself, without relating it to the separation of church and state or integration, this statement can be read as pro-gay without a creating an 'us' versus 'them' divide. There is a recognition in the statement that LGBTQ identities can be controversial in both Christian, Muslim and other religious traditions.

#### **4.6 Election period 2012-2017**

After the success of the PVV and the loss of seats of the PvdA in the 2010 elections, one may wonder if PvdA adjusted some of their standpoints to win back votes and regain a place in the coalition. In the case of LGBTQ emancipation, this does not seem to be the case. The party program dedicated six pages to 'participation', this section includes LGBTQ and women's emancipation, integration and emancipation. They start off by stating that the LGBTQ

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<sup>128</sup> 'Wouter Bos kiest openlijk voor Marcouch', *De Volkskrant*, 07-12-2009, <https://www.volkskrant.nl/nieuws-achtergrond/wouter-bos-kiest-openlijk-voor-marcouch~b76604fe/>

<sup>129</sup> DNNP, Archive PvdA, 'Iedereen telt mee', 2010, 28, <http://irs.ub.rug.nl/dbi/4c31ea46d5729>

emancipation is not completed and many inequalities still persist and propose multiple policies to improve the current inequalities. PvdA also addresses lesbians, transgender, and bisexuals in the overarching abbreviation in Dutch ‘LHBT.’ Furthermore, the PvdA specifically proposes better support for LGBTQ asylum-seekers, and LGBTQ people with religious backgrounds recognizing the intersections of religious, immigrant and LGBTQ identities. These policy proposals can hence be read as legitimately pro-gay.

In the section on women’s emancipation, clear statements are found that argue for the improvement of women’s rights and equality. However, what stands out is their policy proposal to impose a legal ban on the burqa:

*The PvdA find the burqa unfitting in our free and emancipated society. It withholds women from the possibility to participate and advance in society. In places where face-covering clothes form a real problem, such as education or in public transports, it should be forbidden.<sup>130</sup>*

Within this statement, we find the ‘us’ versus ‘them’ rhetoric where the PvdA states that this symbol of religious practice does not fit in ‘our’ free, secular society. This is an example of Key 5(a, b). Paradoxical here is the PvdA’s previously stated commitment to everyone’s freedom to practice their religion and the mutual acceptance that is needed to be a ‘good’ citizen. Here, firstly a limitation of one’s expression of religion and secondly, we find a narrowly defined understanding of women’s emancipation—namely a Western—is found. By banning the burqa, even only in public areas, under the argument that it does not fit within an emancipated society, there is an assumption that a woman who wears the burqa did not make this choice herself. This is an example of Key 6(a). Additionally, even when a woman was not free in her decision to wear the burqa, the ban on the burqa would then further limit a woman in her freedom to move outside of the house. The burqa may allow a woman to move outside the house, not having the burqa would result in staying indoors. Additionally, the overall attention that has been given to the burqa and other face-covering veils in Dutch society contributes to both a disproportionate targeting of women and Islam, often with the aim to illustrate

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<sup>130</sup> DNNP, Archive PvdA, ‘Nederland sterker en socialer, 2012, 32, <http://dnpprepo.ub.rug.nl/id/eprint/492>

assumed incompatibilities between Islam and Dutch society. It is disproportionate because within Dutch society we find strict Christian congregations where women are not allowed to wear pants, have abortions and are excluded from joining political parties such as the ‘Staatkundig Gereformeerde Partij’ (State Reformed Party, SGP). Members of these congregations are, however, native Dutch and can thus not be used as an illustration of incompatibility with the Dutch society. The rhetoric used to argue for a burqa ban hence fits within the PGAIR.

Outside the party program of the PvdA, we also find a direct reference to pro-gay anti-immigrant discourse. In 2016, Lodewijk Asscher was appointed the new party leader of the PvdA. Right before the 2017 elections, in January, party leader Asscher gave a speech at the PvdA election congress. Here, he spoke about his ideas for the upcoming elections. He also spoke about his disagreement with Wilders’ rhetoric of ‘our country’ versus ‘them’ and proclaims that PvdA is in an ideological battle with the PVV. Despite this proclaimed ideological battle, Asscher states:

*Many of us feel a nagging fear that the freedom and equality we are fought for will slowly but surely slip away. That, if we do not intervene it will soon be normal to feel unsafe in certain neighborhoods as a woman, as a gay, as a Jew. I will never accept that.<sup>131</sup>*

The PvdA presents Dutch acquired freedom as being under threat. Asscher does not mention specifically by who these values and accomplishments are threatened by but does refer to certain neighborhoods. It is not explicit that he refers to neighborhoods with a high number of Muslim immigrants, but it is not unlikely to assume he does mean immigrant neighborhoods. After all, in neighborhoods where people live that have fought for our freedom and equality, such unsafety cannot prevail. This exposes an assumed incompatibility between backward immigrants and Dutch culture is an example of Key 5(c) and 6(c). This PGAIR is thus present in the politics of the PvdA during this period.

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<sup>131</sup> Lodewijk Asscher, ‘Toespraak Lodewijk Asscher, Amsterdam, 15-01-2017, <https://www.pvda.nl/congres/toespraak-lodewijk-asscher-3/>



## 4.7 Summary

Since 2006 the PvdA has been proposing specific policies to the advancement of LGBTQ people. Within these policies proposals, there is no direct reference to a threat to the safety or emancipation of LGBTQ people, caused by immigrants. In this sense, they differ from the other mainstream parties VVD and CDA. PvdA also withholds from drawing clear distinctions between a Dutch culture with norms and values based on Judeo-Christian and humanistic traditions and backward immigrant cultures. However, a close reading of the party program reveals PGAIR as early as 2003. For the majority of the years, however, the PvdA uses legitimate pro-gay rhetoric that can be backed by policy proposals to improve LGBTQ emancipation and rights. In the 2012 party program women's right are used to promote a restrictive immigration agenda, but legitimate pro-gay policies are found as well. PGAIR with explicit reference to gay rights within the PvdA is found in 2017. In a speech party leader Lodewijk Asscher refers to the incompatibility between Dutch values and immigrant values through women's and LGBTQ emancipation. While, not as visible in party programs and significantly later than VVD and CDA, PGAIR is found within the PvdA and exposes a move to the Right from PvdA traditional left position in Dutch politics.

## PART THREE

### Conclusion

The position of homosexuality in the Dutch debate has allowed for the creation of an ‘us’ versus ‘them’ narrative divide in Dutch Politics. A divide, which proclaims that ‘Dutch’ values (those that support gay-rights) are inherently contrasting to immigrants’ values (those that don’t support gay-rights). Given that all three mainstream parties, first the VVD and PvdA, and later the CDA, expressed allegiance with the plight of the gay community, it wasn’t hard for them to also leverage gay rights as a tool to promote a more restrictive immigration agenda. Dutch mainstream parties did not adjust their party’s position on the topic of gay rights, they only came to use it as a contrast to immigration as populist parties had done before them. Which, in a most cynical read, can only be seen as an attempt at re-acquiring votes that had switched to populist parties beginning when they initially began employing PGAIR (the LPF in 2002 or the PVV after 2006 and especially after 2010). On a closer examination, it becomes clear that there are distinct differences in the timing, occurrence, and application of PGAIR per mainstream party, which helps to illuminate more subtle possible reasons for each party’s implementation of PGAIR Keys. Ultimately, however, any read still suggests that the use of PGAIR in Dutch mainstream politics was motivated by attempts at power (re-)acquisition.

PGAIR Keys are visible in VVD speech as early as 2003. The year prior, the VVD lost a significant amount of seats in the House of Representatives, a loss that could be attributed to votes moving to LPF, indicating that they may have, in fact, employed PGAIR for political power (re-)acquisition. After Geert Wilders established the PVV in 2006, and became a serious competitor to the VVD in 2010, the VVD began employing PGAIR again, this time more explicitly. This can be seen as an explicit power grab to regain voters that had theoretically been snatched by the PVV in the previous election. By adjusting their standpoint to match that of the PVV regarding immigration, while holding on to their liberal standpoint on LGBTQ emancipation, in effect a prototypical example of PGAIR, the party’s move to the right may have been obfuscated. A close examination of rhetoric, however, exposes the populist roots of this shift, and as such, the VVD’s implementation of

PGAIR after the 2010 election should be considered not only as a rhetorical strategy for power acquisition, but also indicative of a significant move to the right.

PGAIR Keys can also be seen as early as 2003 in CDA speech, they don't mention LGBTQ issues explicitly, however, until 2010. Their discussion of gay-rights may be explained by the rise of PVV in the same year and the attention the PVV paid to LGBTQ issues. CDA's choice to employ explicit PGAIR after the PVV rose in power in 2010, rather than after the LPF rose to power in 2002, can be explained by their traditionally conservative standpoint on LGBTQ rights. To adjust their standpoint one year after their vote against marriage equality would most likely not have been well-received by their constituents. However, by the time they began employing PGAIR in 2010, nearly ten years after same-sex marriage in the Netherlands became legal, the PVV had proven to be a serious competitor and marriage equality had migrated into the realm of established cultural values. This made the employment of PGAIR possible for a party who was once against gay-rights. Under the leadership of Buma, PGAIR became more widely and explicitly employed by the CDA and functioned additionally, much like the VVD before, to shift the CDA from being understood as a strictly center party to significantly more populist in nature.

Within the PvdA, the explicit use of PGAIR became visible significantly later than the VVD, and slightly later than the CDA. While there is one instance of PGAIR Keys in their 2003 party program, PGAIR does not appear again until 2012. Instead, all public facing documents reviewed in this paper indicate that the instances of pro-gay speech in the intermediating years are legitimate. Additionally, party programs between the years 2003 and 2012 maintain relatively left-wing progressive position on migration, with a less restrictive immigration stance. And yet, PGAIR does emerge within the PvdA as well. In 2016, after Lodewijk Asscher became the party leader, instances of PGAIR appear, which is to say, non-legitimate leveraging of pro-gay rhetoric to further anti-immigration sentiment appear. Again, this shift to the increasing popular PGAI rhetorical strategy may be explained by a loss in votes compared to prior years and an increase in the popularity of populist parties within the country. It can thus be speculated, that as the loss in votes didn't explicitly occur only in the year prior in any dramatic capacity, as had been the case for the VVD and the CDA, perhaps Asscher's appointment led the party to the right as a tactic to become more competitive with the likes of the the PVV or even VVD and CDA.

While these party specific applications of PGAIR serve as explanations for why Dutch mainstream political parties employed PGAIR, to say definitively would be to speculate. The limitation of using external facing documentation is that the ‘true’ intentions and motivation, the strategic positioning, as it were, are not present. That said, most scholars agree that using populist rhetorical strategies points to an attempt at maintaining or acquiring power. Given the timing of implementation of PGAIR within Dutch mainstream politics together with existing research on why parties implement populist rhetorical strategies, the use of PGAIR by mainstream parties can be safely, though not definitively, seen as a way for mainstream parties to compete with populist parties and their growing popularity in Dutch politics.

A gaping reveal in this research is the absence of an intersectional understanding of LGBTQ identities by mainstream parties. This absence is illustrated by the simplistic application of pro-gay rhetoric as a mechanism to increase support for anti-immigrant sentiment and legislation, the perpetuation of the myth of incompatibility between ‘Dutch’ culture and values and ‘Muslim/immigrant’ culture. By doing so, just like populist parties did before them, mainstream parties overlook the existence of people who identify as LGBTQ, immigrant, and/or Muslim. This contributes to a continuum of dominance, where mainstream parties have control over marginalized groups who they fail to understand with any complexity.

PGAIR, a key mechanism used by Dutch politicians to criticize one marginalized group while upholding the virtue of another, is paradoxical in its nature: immigrants are too often singled out as being incompatible with ‘Dutch’ culture, even though those same ‘Dutch’ people whom parties are referring to when implementing an ‘us’ narrative, often perform those unwanted behaviors themselves, namely behaviors that marginalize the LGBTQ community. PGAIR assumes the role of ‘exposing’ the ‘incompatibility’ of immigrants and Dutch society. These immigrants are seen as Muslim, while the Dutch are seen as Christian or Jewish. However, none of these religions, nor their scriptures, have been through time and region, the best ally to LGBTQ people. While it is reasonable that religion affects the way in which people look at the world, to use this to generalize, as has been done by mainstream and populist parties alike who implement PGAIR, is both ineffective and xenophobic.

Critical discourse analysis exposes that PGAIR has become mainstream. And that by implementing PGAIR, politicians continue their dominance over socially marginalized groups: both immigrants and LGBTQ people and the intersections embedded therein. The identities of these groups are structurally used to maintain unequal power relations between those in power who 'belong' ('us') and those without power who 'do not belong' ('them'). This continues the hierarchy of power that mainstream politicians have always held in Dutch society and simultaneously continues to exclude marginalized groups from Dutch politics. The use of broad generalizations of (Muslim) immigrant groups and the lack of an intersectional approach upholds an idea of incompatibility between immigrants and native Dutch contributing to a hostile and exclusive environment in the Netherlands. When the perspectives of LGBTQ and immigrants and or Muslims, remain excluded from Dutch politics and policy-making the unequal power relations prevail.

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